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NICHOL'S SERIES OF STANDARD DIVINES.

PURITAN PERIOD.

With General Preface

BY JOHN C. MILLER, D.D.,

LINCOLN COLLEGE; HONORARY CANON OF WORCESTER; RECTOR OF ST MARTIN'S, BIRMINGHAM.

THE

WORKS OF THOMAS BROOKS.

VOL. II.

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THE COMPLETE WORKS

OF

THOMAS BROOKS.

Edited, with Memoir,

BY THE REV. ALEXANDER BALLOCH GROSART,

LIVERPOOL.

VOL. II.

CONTAINING:

AN ARK FOR ALL GOD'S NOAHS—THE PRIVY-KEY OF HEAVEN—HEAVEN ON EARTH; OR, WELL-GROUNDED ASSURANCE.

EDINBURGH: JAMES NICHOL.

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AN ARK FOR ALL GOD'S NOAHS.

NOTE.

The 'Ark for All God's Noahs' was originally published in 1662, and the next edition —from which our text is taken—appeared in 1666, but is not designed 'second' or otherwise. In this, as in other cases, the Publisher seems to have kept the types standing, and to have issued rapidly large impressions without ever changing the date. The title-page is given below.* A quaint and beautiful little edition of this book bears the imprint 'Glasgow College, Printed by Alex. Millar, and are to be sold in his shop opposite to the Well, in the Salt Mercat, 1738." 12mo. G.

* AN
ARKE
FOR ALL
GODS NOAHS
In a gloomy stormy day;
OR,
The best Wine reserved till last.
OR,
The transcendent Excellency of a
believers portion above all earthly
Portions whatsoever:

Discovered in several *SERMONS*,
which may be of singular use at all
times, but especially in these Breaking times,
wherein many have, and many daily do
break for more than their all, and
wherein many thousands are
turned out of all, &c.

By *THOMAS. BROOKS*, late Preacher of the
Gospel at *Margarets New Fishstreet*, and still
Preacher of the Word in *London*, and
Pastor of a Congregation there.

I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me, refuge failed me, no man cared for my soul, I cryed unto thee, O Lord, *I said thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living*, Psal. 142. 4, 5.

London, Printed by *M. S.* for *Henry Cripps*, at the
first entrance into *Popes*-head Alley, next
to *Lombard-street*, 1666.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To all the merchants and tradesmen of England, especially these of the city of London, with all other sorts and ranks of persons that either have or would have God for their portion, grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied.

GENTLEMEN,—The wisest prince that ever sat upon a throne hath told us, that 'a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver,' or as the Hebrew hath it, 'a word spoken, עַל־אָפְנָיו, upon his wheels,' that is, rightly ordered, placed, and circumstantiated. Such a word is, of all words, the most excellent, the most prevalent, and the most pleasant word that can be spoken; such a word is, indeed, a word that is like 'apples of gold in pictures of silver.' Of all words such a word is most precious, most sweet, most desirable, and most delectable. O sirs! to time a word, to set a word upon the wheels, to speak a word to purpose, is the project of this book. Though all truths are glorious, yet there is a double glory upon seasonable truths; and, therefore, I have made it my great business in this treatise to hold forth as seasonable a truth, and as weighty a truth, and as comfortable and encouraging a truth, as any I know in all the book of God. The mother of King Cyrus[1] willed, that the words of those that spoke unto her son should be in silk, but certainly seasonable words are always better than silken words.

Every prudent husbandman observes his fittest season to sow his seeds, and therefore some he sows in the autumn and fall of the leaf, and some in the spring and renewing of the year; some he sows in a dry season, and some he sows in a wet; some he sows in a moist clay, and some he sows in a sandy dry ground, as the Holy Ghost speaks, 'He soweth the fitches and the cumin, and casteth in wheat by measure,' Isa. xxviii. 25. And so all spiritual husbandmen must wisely observe their fittest seasons for the sowing of that immortal seed that God hath put into their hands; and such a thing as this is I have had in my eye, but whether I have hit the mark or missed it, let the Christian reader judge.

One speaking of the glory of heaven saith, 'That the good things of eternal life are so many that they exceed number, so great that they exceed measure, and so precious that they are above all estimation,' &c.[2] The same may I say concerning the saint's portion, for certainly the

[1] Mandane, daughter of Astyages.—G.

[2] Augustine.—G.

good things that are in their portion, in their God, are so many that they exceed number, so great that they exceed measure, and so precious that they are above all estimation.

The same author in one of his epistles hath this remarkable relation, viz., That the same day wherein Jerome died, he was in his study, and had got pen, ink, and paper to write something of the glory of heaven to Jerome, and suddenly he saw a light breaking into his study, and smelt also a very sweet smell, and this voice he thought he heard: 'O Augustine, what doest thou? dost think to put the sea into a little vessel? When the heavens shall cease from their continual motion, then shalt thou be able to understand what the glory of heaven is, and not before, except you come to feel it as I now do.'[1] Certainly, the glory of heaven is beyond all conception and all expression, and so is that portion that is a little hinted at in the following discourse. And, indeed, a full description of that God, that is the believer's portion, is a work too high for an Aaron when standing upon mount Hor; or for a Moses, when standing on the top of Nebo after a Pisgah prospect; yea, it is a work too high and too hard for all those blessed seraphims that are still a-crying before the throne of God, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.'[2] No finite being, though never so glorious, can ever be able fully to comprehend an infinite being. In the second verse of the sixth of Isaiah, we read that each seraphim had six wings, and that with twain he covered the face of God, with twain his feet, and with twain he did fly, intimating, as one well observes upon the place,[3] that with twain they covered his face, the face of God, not their own face, and with twain they covered his feet, not their own feet. They covered his face, his beginning being unknown; they covered his feet, his end being incomprehensible; only the middle are to be seen, the things which are, whereby there may be some glimmering knowledge made out what God is. The wise man hit it, when he said, 'That which is afar off and exceeding deep, who can find it out?' Eccles. vii. 24.[4] Who can find out what God is? The knowledge of him *a priori* is so far off, that he whose arm is able to break even a bow of steel is not able to reach it; so far off, that he who is able to make his nest with the eagle is not able to fly unto it; and so exceeding deep, that he who could follow the leviathan could not fathom it; that he who could set out the centre of the earth, is not able to find it out; and who then is able to reach it? In a word, so far off and so deep too, that 'the depth saith, It is not in me; and the sea saith, It is not in me.' It is such a deep to men and angels as far exceeds the capacity of both. Augustine speaking to that question, What God is? gives this answer:[5] 'Surely such a one as he, who, when he is spoken of, cannot be spoken of; who, when he is considered, cannot be considered of; who, when he is compared to anything, cannot be compared; and when he is defined, groweth greater by defining of him. If that great apostle, that learned his divinity among the angels, yea, to whom the Holy Ghost was an

[1] See Index under Jerome for other references to this.—G.

[2] Num. xx. 28; Deut. xxxii. 49, and xxxiv. 1; Isa. vi. 3.

[3] *Vide* Origen on the text.

[4] There are many depths in God which our shallow reason cannot fathom; and, indeed, it is the credit of our religion, and the glory of our God, that he is unsearchable.

[5] Augustine, *de fide contra Arrianum*, cap. vi.

immediate tutor, did know but 'in part,' then certainly those that are most acute and judicious in divine knowledge may very well conclude, that they know but part of that part that was known to him.'[1] As for my own part, I dare pretend but to a spark of that knowledge that others have attained to, and yet who can tell but that God may turn this spark into such a flame as may warm the hearts of many of his dear and precious ones. Much is done many times by a spark.

O sirs! catch not at the present profits, pleasures, preferments, and honours of this world, but 'lay up a good foundation for the time to come,' provide for eternity, make sure your interest and propriety in God. It was an excellent saying of Lewis of Bavyer [Bavaria?], emperor of Germany: 'Such goods,' said he, 'are worth getting and owning, as will not sink or wash away if a shipwreck happen.' How many of you have lost your all by shipwrecks! and how hath divine providence by your multiplied crosses and losses taught you that, that the good things and the great things of this world cannot be made sure! How many of you have had rich inheritances left you by your fathers, besides the great portions that you have had with your wives, and the vast estates that you have gained by trading; but what is become of all? Is not all buried in the deep, or in the grave of oblivion? Oh the unconstancy and the grand impostury of this world! Oh the flux and reflux of riches, greatness, honours, and preferments! How many men have we seen shining in their worldly pomp and glory like stars in the firmament, who are now vanished into smoke or comets! How hath the moon of many great men's riches and honours been eclipsed at the full, and the sun of their pomp gone down at noon!

'It was,' saith the historian [Justinian], 'a wonderful precedent of vanity and variety of human condition to see mighty Xerxes to float and fly away in a small vessel, who but a little before wanted sea-room for his navy.' The Dutch, to express the world's vanity and uncertainty, have very wittily pictured a man with a full blown bladder on his shoulders, and another standing by pricking the bladder with a pin, with this motto, *Quam subito*, How soon is all blown down! I am not willing to make the porch too wide, else I might have given you famous instances of the vanity and uncertainty of all worldly wealth, pomp, and glory, from the Assyrian, Chaldean, Persian, Grecian, and Roman kingdoms, whose glory now lies all in the dust. By all this it is most evident that earthly portions cannot be made sure, they 'make themselves wings, and they fly away,' Prov. xxiii. 5.

Oh! but now God is a portion that may be made sure. In the time of the Marian persecution, there was a woman, who, being convened before bloody Bonner, then bishop of London, upon the trial of religion, he threatened her that he would take away her husband from her: saith she, Christ is my husband. I will take away thy child; Christ, saith she, is better to me than ten sons. I will strip thee, saith he, of all thy outward comforts; but Christ is mine, saith she, and you cannot strip me of him.[2] A Christian may be stripped of anything but his God; he may be stripped of his estate, his friends, his relations, his

[1] Such are not only good scholars, but also great scholars, who have learned contentedly to be ignorant where God would not have them knowing.

[2] Mr Foxe, Acts and Monum. [See under Bonner.—G.]

liberty, his life, but he can never be stripped of his God. As God is a portion that none can give to a Christian but himself, so God is a portion that none can take from a Christian but himself; and, therefore, as ever you would have a sure portion, an abiding portion, a lasting portion, yea, an everlasting portion, make sure of God for your portion.

O Sirs! that you would judge that only worth much now, which will be found of much worth at last, when you shall lie upon a dying bed, and stand before a judgment-seat. Oh that men would prize and value all earthly portions now, as they will value them when they come to die, and when their souls shall sit upon their trembling lips, and when there shall be but a short step between them and eternity. Oh, at what a poor rate, at what a low rate do men value their earthly portions! then, certainly, it will be their very great wisdom to value their earthly portions now as they would value them then. And oh that men would value this glorious, this matchless portion that is held forth in this treatise now, as they will value it and prize it when they come to die, and when they come to launch out into the ocean of eternity! I have read of a stationer, who, being at a fair, hung out several pictures of men famous in their kinds, among which he had also the picture of Christ, upon which divers men bought according to their several fancies: the soldier buys his Cæsar, the lawyer his Justinian, the physician his Galen, the philosopher his Aristotle, the poet his Virgil, the orator his Cicero, and the divine his Augustine; but all this while the picture of Christ hung by as a thing of no value, till a poor chapman, that had no more money than would purchase that, bought it, saying, Now every man hath taken away his god, let me have mine too. O Sirs! it would make any gracious, any serious, any ingenious, any conscientious heart to bleed, to see at what a high rate all sorts and ranks of men do value earthly portions, which at best are but counterfeit pictures, whenas this glorious portion that is here treated on hangs by as a thing of no value, of no price. Most men are mad upon the world, and so they may have much of that for their portion, they care not whether ever they have God for their portion or no. Give them but a palace in Paris, and then with that French duke [the Duke of Burbone (Bourbon)] they care not for a place in paradise; give them but a mess of pottage, and let who will take the birthright; give them but manna in a wilderness, and let who will take the land of Canaan; give them but ground which is pleasant and rich, and then with the Reubenites they will gladly take up their rest on this side the Holy Land; give them but their bags full, and their barns full, and then with the rich fool in the Gospel they can think of nothing but of taking their ease, and of eating and drinking, and making merry, Luke xii. 16–22. So brutish and foolish are they in their understandings, as if their precious and immortal souls were good for nothing but as salt to keep their bodies from rotting and stinking.

Oh that these men would seriously consider, that as a cup of pleasant wine, offered to a condemned man in the way to his execution, and as the feast of him who sat under a naked sword, hanging perpendicularly over his head by a slender thread,[1] and as Adam's forbidden fruit, seconded by a flaming sword, and as Belshazzar's dainties, overlooked

[1] Damocles, Cicero. *Tusc.* v. 21; Horace, *Carm.* iii. 1. xvii.—G.

by an handwriting against the wall; such and only such are all earthly portions to those that have not God for their portion.

Well, gentlemen, remember this, there is no true happiness to be found in any earthly portions. Solomon, having made a critical inquiry after the excellency of all creature comforts, gives this in as the ultimate extraction from them all, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.' If you should go to all the creatures round, they will tell you that happiness is not in them. If you should go to the earth, the earth will tell you that happiness grows not in the furrows of the field. If you go to the sea, the sea will tell you that happiness is not in the treasures of the deep. If you go to the beasts of the field, or to the birds of the air, they will tell you that happiness is not to be found on their backs, nor in their bowels. If you go to your bags, or heaps of gold and silver, they will tell you that happiness is not to be found in them. If you go to crowns and sceptres, they will tell you that happiness is too precious and too glorious a gem to be found in them.

As it is not the great cage that makes the bird sing, so it is not the great estate that makes the happy life, nor the great portion that makes the happy soul. There is no true comfort nor no true happiness to be drawn out of the standing pools of outward sufficiencies. All true comfort and happiness is only to be found in having of an all-sufficient God for your portion: Ps. cxliv. 15, 'Happy is that people that is in such a case, yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.' And therefore, as ever you would be happy in both worlds, it very highly concerns you to get an interest in God, and to be restless in your own souls till you come to enjoy God for your portion.

A man that hath God for his portion is a non-such; he is the rarest and the happiest man in the world; he is like the morning star in the midst of the clouds; he is like the moon when it is at full; he is like the flower of the roses in the spring of the year; he is like the lilies by the springs of waters; he is like the branches of frankincense in the time of summer; he is like a vessel of massy gold that is set about with all manner of precious stones.[1]

Nothing can make that man miserable that hath God for his portion, nor nothing can make that man happy that wants God for his portion: the more rich, the more wretched; the more great, the more graceless; the more honourable, the more miserable that man will be that hath not God for his portion. The Sodomites were very wealthy, and who more wanton and wicked than they? The Egyptians and Babylonians were very rich, great, and potent in the world, and what greater oppressors and persecutors of the people of God than these? Oh the slavery, the captivity, and the woful misery of the people of God under those cruel tyrants! Have not the Nimrods, the Nebuchadnezzars, the Belshazzars, the Alexanders, and the Cæsars, &c., been commonly the lords of the world, and who so abominably wicked as these? No men for wickedness have been able to match them or come near them.

It hath been long since observed to my hand, that Daniel sets forth the several monarchies of the world by sundry sorts of cruel beasts, to shew that as they were gotten by beastly subtilty and cruelty, so they were supported and maintained by brutish sensuality, craft, and tyranny.

[1] This you will find fully cleared up in the following treatise.

I have read of a Lacedæmonian that said, that they well deserved death that did not quench tyranny, they should quite have consumed it with fire. But whether he hit the mark or missed it, let the reader judge. Well, Sirs! you may be the lords of this world, and yet you will certainly be miserable in another world, except you get God for your portion. The top of man's happiness in this world lies in his having of God for his portion. He that hath God for his portion enjoys all; and he that wants an interest and propriety in God enjoys nothing at all.

Gentlemen, I have read of an heathen who, seeing a sudden shipwreck of all his wealth, said, Well, fortune, I see now that thou wouldst have me to be a philosopher. Oh that you would say under all your heavy losses and crosses, Well! we now see that God would have us 'lay up treasure in heaven,' Mat. vi. 19, 20; we now see that God would have us look after a better portion than any this world affords; we now see that it highly concerns us to secure our interest and propriety in God; we now see that to enjoy God for our portion is the one thing necessary. Have not many of you said, nay sworn, that if you might but see and enjoy the delight of your eyes, that then you should have a sweeping trade, and abound in all plenty and prosperity, and grow rich and great and glorious in the world, and be eased of everything that did but look like a burden, &c. If it be indeed thus with you, why do you so complain, murmur, and repine? and why do many of you walk up and down the Exchange and streets with tears in your eyes, and with heaviness in your hearts, and with cracked credits, and threadbare coats, and empty purses? and why are so many of you broke, and so many prisoners, and so many hid, and so many fled? But if it be otherwise, and that you are sensible that you have put a cheat upon yourselves, I say not upon others, and that as you have been self-flatterers, so you have been self-deceivers, the more highly it concerns you to do yourselves, your souls that right, as to make sure [of] God for your portion. For what else can make up those woful disappointments under which you are fallen?

It is a sad sight to see all the arrows that men shoot to fall upon their own heads, or to see them twist a cord to hang themselves, or to see men dig a pit for others and to fall into it themselves; and it is but justice that men should bake as they brew, and that they which brew mischief should have the first and largest draught of it themselves.

Now the best way to prevent so sad a sight and so great a mischief, is to get God for your portion: for when once God comes to be a man's portion, then 'all things shall work together for his good,' Rom. viii. 28, and then God will preserve him from such hurtful and mischievous actings. The whole world is a great bedlam, and multitudes there are that think madly, and that design madly, and that talk madly, and that act madly, and that walk madly. Now as you would not be found in the number of those bedlams, it highly concerns you to get God for your portion, that so you may be filled with that wisdom that may preserve you from the folly and madness of this mad world.

Gentlemen, the following sermons I preached in the year 1660, at Olave's, Bread Street, and God blessed them then to those Christians that attended on my ministry, and I hope he will bless them also to

the internal and eternal welfare of your souls, to whom they are now dedicated. They are much enlarged; the profit will be yours, the labour hath been mine. I judge them very seasonable and suitable to present dispensations, else they had not seen the light at this time. Curiosity is the spiritual adultery of the soul; curiosity is that green-sickness of the soul, whereby it longs for novelties, and loathes sound and wholesome truths; it is the epidemical distemper of this age and hour.

And therefore, if any of you are troubled with this itch of curiosity, and love to be wise above what is written, and delight to scan the choice mysteries of religion by carnal reason, and affect elegant expressions and seraphical notions, and the flowers of rhetoric, more than sound and wholesome truths, then you may ease yourselves, if you please, of the trouble of reading this following treatise; only remember this, that the prudent husbandman looks more and delights more in the ripeness and soundness and goodness of the corn that is in his field, than he doth at the beauty of the cockle; and remember, that no man can live more miserably than he that lives altogether upon sauces; and he that looks more at the handsomeness than he doth at the wholesomeness of the dishes of meat that are set before him, may well pass for a fool.

Well, gentlemen, for a close, remember this, that as Noah was drunk with his own wine, and as Goliath was beheaded by his own sword, and as the rose is destroyed by the canker that it breeds in itself, and as Agrippina was killed by Nero, to whom she gave breath; so if ever you are eternally destroyed, you will be destroyed by yourselves; if ever you are undone, you will be undone by yourselves; if ever you are scourged to death, it will be by rods of your own making; and if ever the bitter cup of damnation be put into your hands, it will be found to be of your own preparing, mingling, and embittering.

Behold, I have set life and death, heaven and hell, glory and misery, before you in this treatise; and therefore, if you will needs choose death rather than life, hell rather than heaven, misery rather than glory, what can be more just than that you should perish to all eternity? If you will not have God for your portion, you shall be sure to have wrath for your portion, and hell for your portion, &c.

Well, sirs! remember this at last: every man shall only thank his own folly for his own bane, his own sin for his own everlasting shame, his own iniquity for his own endless misery.

I have now no more to do but to improve all the interest that I have in heaven, that this treatise may be blessed to all your souls, and that you all experience what it is to have God for your portion; for that will be my joy as well as yours, and my crown as well as yours, and my glorying as well as yours, in the great day of our Lord Jesus; and so 'I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified,' Acts xx. 32; and rest, gentlemen, your souls' servant,

THOMAS BROOKS.

A MATCHLESS PORTION.

The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.—LAM. III. 24.

CERTAINLY if Ennius could pick out gold out of a dunghill, I may, by divine assistance, much better pick out golden matter out of such a golden mine as my text is, to enrich the souls of men withal. The best of painters [Apelles], to draw an exquisite Venus, had set before him an hundred choice and selected beauties, to take from one an eye, another a lip, a third a smile, a fourth an hand, and from each of them that special lineament in which the most excelled; but I have no need of any other scripture to be set before me to draw forth the excellency of the saints' portion than that which I have now pitched upon; for the beauty, excellency, and glory of an hundred choice scriptures are epitomized in this one.

The Jewish doctors and other writers differ about the time of Jeremiah's penning this book of the Lamentations; but to be ignorant of the circumstance of time when this book was made, is such a crime as I suppose will not be charged upon any man's account in the great day of our Lord Jesus.

Doubtless this book of the Lamentations was composed by Jeremiah in the time of the Babylonian captivity. In this book the prophet sadly laments and bewails the grievous calamities and miseries that had befallen the Jews, viz. the ruin of their state, the devastation of their land, the destruction of their glorious city and temple, which was the great wonder of the world, the profanation of all his holy things, the contemptible and deplorable condition of all sorts, ranks, and degrees of men; and then he complains of their sins as the procuring causes of all those calamities that God in his righteousness had inflicted upon them. He exhorts them also to patience under the mighty hand of God, and stirs them up to repent and reform, as they would have their sins pardoned, judgments removed, divine wrath pacified, their insulting enemies suppressed, and former acts and grants of favour and grace restored to them.

But to come to the words of my text,

The Lord Jehovah, from *Havah, he was.* This name *Jehovah* is the most proper name of God, and it is never attributed to any but to God.

1. First, Jehovah sets out God's eternity, in that it containeth all times, future, present, and past.[1]

2. Secondly, It sets out also God's self-existency, coming from *havah, to be.*

3. Thirdly, When either some special mercy is promised, or some extraordinary judgment is threatened, then the name of *Jehovah* is commonly annexed; to shew that that God whose being is from himself, and who gives a being to all his creatures both on heaven and on earth, will certainly give a being to his promises and threatenings, and not fail to accomplish the words that are gone out of his mouth.

4. Fourthly, This name *Jehovah* consists only of quiescent letters, *i. e.* letters of rest, as the Hebrews call them, to shew that there is no rest till we come to Jehovah, and that in him we may safely and securely rest, as the dove did in Noah's ark.

'Is my portion.' *Chelki*, from חלק, *chalak;* the Hebrew word signifies to divide. He alludes, as I take it, to the dividing of the land of Canaan amongst the Israelites by lot. 'The Lord,' saith he, 'is my portion,' my part, my lot; and with this portion I rest fully satisfied, as the Israelites were to do with their parts and portions in that pleasant land. It is true, saith Jeremiah, in the name of the church, I am thus and thus afflicted, and sorely distressed on all hands; but yet 'the Lord is my portion,' and that supports and bears up my spirits from fainting and sinking in this evil day.

'Saith my soul.' *Naphshi*, from נפש, *nephesh;* the Hebrew word hath nine several senses or significations in the Scripture. But let this suffice, that by *soul* here in the text we are to understand the heart, the mind, the spirit, and the understanding of a man. Well, saith the prophet, though I am in a sea of sorrow, and in a gulf of misery, yet my heart tells me that 'the Lord is my portion;' my mind tells me that 'the Lord is my portion;' my spirit tells me that 'the Lord is my portion;' and my understanding tells me that 'the Lord is my portion;' and therefore I will bear up bravely in the face of all calamities and miseries.

'Therefore will I hope in him.' The Hebrew word אוחיל, that is here rendered *hope*, is from יחל, *Jachal*, that signifies both hoping, expecting, and trusting; also it signifies a patient waiting upon the Lord.[2] The prophet Jeremiah had not only a witness above him, but also a witness within him, that the Lord was his portion; and therefore he resolves firmly to hope in the Lord, and sweetly to trust on the Lord, and quietly and patiently to wait upon the Lord, till God should turn his storm into a calm, and his sad winter into a blessed summer.

In my text there are three things observable:

First, An assertion or proposition in those words, 'The Lord is my portion.'

Secondly, A proof of it in those words, 'saith my soul.'

Thirdly, The use or inference from the premises in those words, 'Therefore will I hope in him.'

The words being thus opened, the proposition that I intend to insist upon is this, viz.:

[1] The three syllables contain the notes of all times: *Je*, the time to come; *ho*, the time present; *vah*, the time past.

[2] Gen. viii. 10; Isa. xlii. 4; Ps. xxxi. 25.

Doct. That the Lord is the saints' portion, the Lord is the believers' portion.

I shall call in a few scriptures to witness to the truth of this proposition, and then I shall further open it to you: Ps. xvi. 5, 'The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot;' Ps. lxxiii. 26, 'My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever;' Ps. cxix. 57, 'Thou art my portion, O Lord: I have said that I would keep thy words;' Jer. x. 16, 'The portion of Jacob is not like them: for he is the former of all things; and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: the Lord of hosts is his name.'

Now for the further opening and clearing up of this great and glorious, this sweet and blessed truth, I shall endeavour to shew you,

First, What a portion the Lord is to his saints, to his gracious ones; and,

Secondly, The reasons or grounds whereupon the saints have laid claim to God as their portion.

I. For the first, *What a portion God is.* Now the excellency of this portion I shall shew you by an induction of particulars, thus:

(1.) *First, God is a present portion.* He is a portion in hand, he is a portion in possession. All the scriptures that are cited to prove the doctrine, evidence this to be a truth, Ps. xlviii. 14, Isa. xxv. 9. And so doth that Ps. xlvi. 1, 'God is a very present help in trouble.' The Hebrew word *betsaroth* is in the plural number *troubles*, that is, God is a present help in *many troubles*, in great troubles, and in continued troubles. *Betsaroth* is from צור, *tsor*, that signifies to straiten, and closely to besiege. It notes the extremity of affliction and trouble.[1] When the people of God are in their greatest extremity, then God will be a present help, a present portion to them: Isa. xliii. 2, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.' God will be a present help, a present relief, a present support, a present comfort, a present portion to his people, in all those great and various trials that they may be exercised under: Ps. cxlii. 5, 'I cried unto thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.' God is a portion in present possession, and not a portion in reversion. The psalmist doth not say, Thou mayest be my portion in another world, but 'Thou art my portion in the land of the living;' nor he doth not say, Thou wilt be my portion in another world, but 'Thou art my portion in the land of the living.' Look, as Elkanah gave Hannah a worthy portion in hand, 1 Sam. i. 5, so God gives himself to his saints as a worthy portion in hand. Many men wait, and wait long, for their earthly portions before they enjoy them; yea, their patience is oftentimes wore so threadbare in waiting, that they wish their parents in Abraham's bosom; ay, and sometimes in a worser place, that so they may inherit their honours, lordships, lands, treasures, &c. Look, as a bird in the hand is worth two, ay, ten, in the bush, so a portion in possession is worth two, ay, ten, in reversion. Now, God is a portion in present possession, and that speaks out the excellency of the saints'

[1] Maximilian, the emperor, was so delighted with that sentence of Paul, *Si Deus nobiscum*, if God be with us, who shall be against us? that he caused it to be written upon the walls in most rooms of his palace.

portion. As he in Plutarch said of the Scythians, that although they had no music nor vines among them, yet, as a better thing, they had gods, so I may say, though the saints have not this, nor that, nor the other earthly portion among them, yet, as a better thing, they have God for their present portion; and what can they desire more? But,

(2.) *Secondly*, As God is a present portion, so God is *an immense portion*, he is a vast large portion, he is the greatest portion of all portions: 1 Tim. vi. 15, 'Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.' These words are a stately and lofty description of the greatness of God. The apostle heapeth up many words together, to shew that in greatness God excels all: Isa. xl. 15–17, 'Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.' Not only one nation, but many nations; yea, not only many nations, but all nations, in comparison of God, are but as the drop of a bucket; and what is lesser than a drop? and as the small dust of a balance; and what is of lighter weight and lesser worth than the small dust or powder of the balance that hangs on the scale, and yet never alters the weight? yea, they are nothing, they are less than nothing. And though Lebanon was a very great spacious forest, and had abundance of beasts in it, yet God was a God of that infinite greatness, that though all the beasts harbouring in that stately forest should be slain, and all the wood growing on it cut down to burn them with it, all would not make up a sacrifice any ways answerable or proportionable to his greatness with whom they had to do. And so in that Ps. cxlvii. 5, 'Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite,' or as the Hebrew hath it, 'of his understanding there is no number.' Such is his greatness, that he knows not only all kinds and sorts of things, but even all particulars, though they exceed all number: Ps. cxlv. 3, 'Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable,' or as the Hebrew hath it, 'of his greatness there is no search.' God is infinitely above all names, all notions, all conceptions, all expressions, and all parallels: Ps. cl. 2, 'Praise him for his mighty acts, praise him according to his excellent greatness,' or greatness of greatness, or abundance of greatness, or according to the multitude of his greatness, as the Hebrew and Greek carries it; and so in that Deut. x. 17, 'For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward.'[1] God is the original cause of all greatness. All that greatness that is in any created beings, whether they are angels or men, is from God; all their greatness is but a beam of his sun, a drop out of his sea, a mite out of his treasury. God is a God of that infinite greatness, that he fills heaven and earth with his presence; he is everywhere, and yet circumscribed to no place; he is in all things, and without all things, and above all things, and this speaks out his immensity, Ps. cxxxix. Job had a very large portion, before God made a breach upon him: 'He had seven thousand sheep, and three thousand

[1] In Daniel, God is called *El Elim*, the mighty of mighties.

camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household,' Job i. 3; but at last God gives him twice as much as he had at first, 'for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses,' Job xlii. 12. Cattle are only instanced in, because the wealth of that country consisted especially in cattle; but yet, doubtless, Job had a great many other good things, as goods, lands, possessions, and stately habitations; but what is all this to a saint's portion? Certainly, had not Job had God for his portion, he had been but a rich fool, a golden beast, notwithstanding all the great things that God had heaped upon him. And so Ahasuerus had a very large portion, 'he reigned from India unto Ethiopia, over a hundred and seven and twenty provinces,' Esther i. 1, 2; but what were all his provinces but as so many handfuls of dust, in comparison of the saints' portion? The whole Turkish empire, saith Luther, is but a crust that God throws to a dog. Had a man all the world for his portion, it would be but a poor pittance. Nebuchadnezzar had a very great portion: Daniel v. 18, 19, 'O thou king, the most high God gave thy father Nebuchadnezzar a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour. And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive, and whom he would he set up, and whom he would he put down.' And so in that Jer. xxvii. 5–8, 'I have made the earth, the man, and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power, and by my outstretched arm; and I have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me. And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come; and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him. And it shall come to pass, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the Lord, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.'[1] The portion that here God gives to Nebuchadnezzar is a wonderful large portion; and yet all these nations that God gave to him were but as so many molehills, or as so many birds' nests, compared with a saint's portion. All nations are but as a drop of a bucket, that may in a moment be wiped off with a finger, in comparison of God, nay, they are all nothing; but that word is too high, for they are less than nothing. Had a man as many worlds at his command as there be men on earth, or angels in heaven, yet they would be but as so many drops, or as so many atoms to a saint's portion.

When Alcibiades was proudly boasting of his lands that lay together, Socrates wittily rebukes his pride by bringing him a map of the world, and wishing him to shew him where his lands did lie; his lands would hardly amount to more than the prick of a pin.[2] England, Scotland, and Ireland are but three little spots to the vast continents that be in

[1] See also Jeremiah xxviii. 14.

[2] Cf. Plato *Conviv.* Isocrates, *De Bigis* 12.—G.

other parts of the world; and what then is thy palace, thy lordships, thy manors, thy farm, thy house, thy cottage, but a little *minum*, but a prick of a pin to God, who is so great, so vast a portion! Oh, sirs! had you the understanding of all the angels in heaven, and the tongues of all the men on earth, yet you would not be able to conceive, express, or set forth the greatness and largeness of a saint's portion. Can you tell the stars of heaven, or number the sands of the sea, or stop the sun in his course, or raise the dead, or make a new world? Then, and not till then, will you be able to declare what a great, what an immense portion God is. If 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the great things that God hath laid up in the gospel' (for so that 1 Cor. ii. 9 is to be understood), oh how much less, then, are they able to declare the great things that God hath laid up for his people in another world! But,

(3.) *Thirdly*, As God is an immense portion, a large portion, so God is *an all-sufficient portion:* Gen. xvii. 1, 'And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God: walk before me, and be thou perfect. I am God Almighty,' or as some carry the words, 'I am God all-sufficient, or self-sufficient.'[1] God hath self-sufficiency and all-sufficiency in himself. Some derive the word *Shaddai*, that is here rendered almighty or all-sufficient, from *Shad*, a *dug*, because God feeds his children with sufficiency of all good things, as the tender mother doth the sucking child: Gen. xv. 1, 'After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward;' I will be thy buckler to defend thee from all kind of mischief and miseries, and I will be thy exceeding great reward to supply thee with all necessary and desirable mercies; and what can a saint desire more? Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory: and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' The sun, which among all inanimate creatures is the most excellent, notes all manner of excellency, provision, and prosperity; and the shield, which among all artificial creatures is the chiefest, notes all manner of protection whatsoever. Under the name of grace, all spiritual good is wrapped up; and under the name of glory, all eternal good is wrapped up; and under the last clause, 'no good thing will he withhold,' is wrapped up all temporal good: all put together speaks out God to be an all-sufficient portion. Before the world was made, before angels or men had a being, God was as blessed and as glorious in himself as now he is. God is such an all-sufficient and such an excellent being, that nothing can be added to him to make him more excellent. Man in his best estate is so great a piece of vanity, Ps. xxxix. 5, that he stands in need of a thousand thousand things; he needs the air to breathe in, the earth to bear him, and fire to warm him, and clothes to cover him, and an house to shelter him, and food to nourish him, and a bed to ease him, and friends to comfort him, &c. But this is the excellency of God, that he hath all excellencies in himself, and stands in need of nothing. Were there as many worlds as there are men in the world, and were all those worlds full of blessed saints, yea, were there as many heavens as there

[1] *In quo nihil desiderari possit boni.*—Zanchius, de nat. Dei, lib. iv. cap. i. qu. 1.

are stars in heaven, and were all those heavens full of glorious angels, yet all these saints and angels together could not add the least to God; for what can drops taken out of the sea add unto the sea? what can finite creatures add to an infinite being? Though all the men in the world should praise the sun, and say, The sun is a glorious creature, yet all this would add nothing to the light and glory of the sun; so, though all the saints and angels shall be blessing, and praising, and admiring, and worshipping of God to all eternity, yet they shall never be able to add anything to God, who is blessed for ever. O Christians! God is an all-sufficient portion: his power is all-sufficient to protect you; his wisdom is all-sufficient to direct you; his mercy is all-sufficient to pardon you; his goodness is all-sufficient to provide for you; his word is all-sufficient to support you and strengthen you; and his grace s all-sufficient to adorn you and enrich you; and his Spirit is all-sufficient to lead you and comfort you; and what can you desire more? O sirs! God hath within himself all the good of angels, of men, and universal nature; he hath all glory, all dignity, all riches, all treasures, all pleasures, all delights, all comforts, all contents, all joys, all beatitudes in himself. All the scattered excellencies and perfections that be in the creatures are eminently, transcendently, and perfectly in him. Look, as the worth and value of many pieces of silver are contracted in one piece of gold, so all the whole volume of perfections which is spread through heaven and earth are epitomised in God, according to that old saying, *Omne bonum in summo bono*, all good is in the chiefest good.[1] God is one infinite perfection in himself, which is eminently and virtually all perfections of the creatures. All the good, the excellency, the beauty and glory, that is in all created beings, are but parts of that whole that is in God; and all the good that is in them is borrowed and derived from God, who is the first cause, and the universal cause, of all that good that is in angels or men. God is a sufficient portion to secure your souls, and to supply all your wants, and to satisfy all your desires, and to answer all your expectations, and to suppress all your enemies, and, after all, to bring you to glory; and what can you desire more?

But now all earthly portions are insufficient portions; they can neither prevent afflictions, nor support the soul under afflictions, nor mitigate afflictions, nor yet deliver a man from afflictions; they can neither arm the soul against temptations, nor comfort the soul under temptations, nor lead the soul out of temptations.[2] All the creatures in the world are but as so many cyphers without God; when God frowns, all the creatures in the world are not sufficient to cheer the soul; when God withdraws, all the creatures in the world are not sufficient to sustain the soul; when God clouds his face, all the creatures in the world are not sufficient to make it day with the soul, &c. There is not enough in the whole creation to content, quiet, or satisfy one immortal soul. He that hath most of the world would have more, and he that hath least of the world hath enough, if his soul can but groundedly say, 'The Lord is my portion.' But,

[1] God is *omnia super omnia;* and many of the very heathens counted God *optimum maximum*, the best and greatest.

[2] A golden crown cannot cure the headache, nor a purple robe cannot fray away a burning fever, nor a bed of gold cannot give ease to a distempered body, nor the velvet slipper cannot take away the pain of the gout.

(4.) *Fourthly*, As the Lord is an all-sufficient portion, so the Lord is *a most absolute, needful, and necessary portion.* The want of an earthly portion may trouble me, but the want of God for my portion will damn me. It is not absolutely necessary that I should have a portion in gold, or silver, or jewels, or goods, or lands; but it is absolutely necessary that I should have God for my portion. I may have union and communion with God, though, with the apostles, I have neither gold nor silver in my purse, Acts iii. 6; I may be holy and happy, though, with Lazarus, Luke xvi. 20, 21, I have never a rag to hang on my back, nor never a dry crust to put into my belly; I may to heaven at last, and I may be glorious in another world, though, with Job, I should be stripped of all my worldly glory, and set upon a dunghill in this world, Job i., &c.; but I can never be happy here, nor blessed hereafter, except God be my portion. Though I could truly say that all the world were mine, yet if I could not truly say that the Lord is my portion, I should be but miserable under all my worldly enjoyments. To have God for my portion is absolutely necessary, for without it I am for ever and ever undone, Eph. ii. 12. In this verse you have several *withouts*, and it is very observable that they that were without God in the world, they were without Christ, without the church, without the covenant, without the promise, and without hope in the world; and therefore, such persons must needs be in a most sad and deplorable condition, &c.

[1.] First, In relation to the soul, and in relation to salvation, God is the most absolute necessary portion. If God be not my portion, my soul can never enjoy communion with him in this world; if God be not my portion, my soul can never be saved by him in the other world. But,

[2.] Secondly, When sinners are under terrors and horrors of conscience, when their consciences are awakened and convinced of the vileness of their natures, of the unspeakable evil that is in sin, yea, in the least sin, and of their lost, undone, and miserable estate out of Christ, Oh then! what would they not give to have God for their portion?[1] Oh, then they would give all the gold and silver they have in the world to have God for their portion; oh, then they would give, Micah vi. 6, 7, 'thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil; yea, they would give their first-born, they would give the very fruit of their bodies, that they might have God to be the portion of their souls; oh, then they would say, as Mephibosheth said unto the king, 'Let Ziba take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house,' 2 Sam. xix. 29, 30. Under distress of conscience, poor sinners will cry out, Oh! let who will take all our honours, and all our manors, and all our treasures, and all our stores, and all our lands, and all our lordships, and all our bags, so we may have God for our portion. Oh! let us but have God for our portion, and we care not a straw who takes all. Now, what doth this speak out, but that, of all portions, God is the most absolute necessary portion? But,

[3.] Thirdly, Upon a dying bed, an awakened sinner sets the highest price, value, and esteem upon such as have God for their portion. Now

[1] *Una guttula malæ conscientiæ totum mare mundani gaudii absorbet.*—Luther.

he esteems a saint in rags that hath God for his portion above a wicked emperor in his royal robes, who hath only the world for his portion. What though wicked men, when they are in the height of their worldly prosperity, felicity, and glory, do slight the saints, and revile and scorn the saints, and contemn and undervalue the saints, Lam. ii. 14, 15; Zeph. ii. 8–10, &c.; yet, when death knocks at their doors, and when their consciences are startled, and when hell fire flashes in their faces, and when the worm within begins to gnaw, oh now, if all the world were a lump of gold, and in their hands to dispose of, they would give it all, so they might have that honour and happiness to change conditions with those who have God for their portion: Num. xxiii. 10, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.' Though men who have their portion in this life do not love to live the life of the righteous, yet, when they come to die, they are often desirous that they might die the death of the righteous. And this many hundred ministers and Christians can witness from their own experience. Lazarus having God for his portion, when he died he went to heaven without a rag on his back, or a penny in his purse; whereas Dives, who had not God for his portion when he died, went tumbling down to hell in all his riches, bravery, and glory.[1] Oh! it is infinitely better to go to heaven a beggar than to go to hell an emperor; and this the sinner understands when his conscience comes to be enlightened upon a dying bed, and therefore he cries out, Oh send for such a minister, and send for such and such a Christian, and let them pray with me, and counsel me, and, if it be possible, give out some drops of comfort to me. Oh that I had never derided nor reviled them! Oh that I had never opposed and persecuted them! Oh that I had lived at such a rate of holiness and exactness as they have done! Oh that I had walked with God as they have walked! Oh that I had laid out my time, my strength, my treasure, my parts, my all for God, as they have done! Oh that my estate was as good, as safe, and as happy as theirs is! Oh that I could as truly say that the Lord is my portion, as they can say that the Lord is their portion! And what doth all this speak out, but that high esteem and value that they set upon those that have God for their portion? So that upon this threefold account, we may safely conclude that God is a most absolute, needful, and necessary portion. But,

(5.) *Fifthly*, As the Lord is a most absolute, needful, and necessary portion, so the Lord is *a pure and unmixed portion*. God is an unmixed good, he hath nothing in him but goodness; he is an ocean of sweetness, without one drop of bitterness; he is a perfect beauty, without the least spot or shadow of deformity, Deut. xxxii. 4, Hab. i. 13. All other portions are a bitter sweet; but God is a rose without prickles; he is a good, in which there is not the least evil: 1 John i. 5, 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.' There are no mixtures in God. God is a most clear, bright, shining light, yea, he is all light, and in him is no darkness at all. God is all light and all love, all sweetness and all goodness, all kindness and all graciousness, and there is no uncomeliness, no unloveliness, no bitterness, nor no darkness at all in God. The moon when it shines brightest hath her dark spots and specks; but God is a light that shines most gloriously without the least spot or

[1] See Wisdom v. 1–8. All these verses are worth their weight in gold.

speck; God is a most pure, clear, splendid light. It is very observable, that the apostle, to illustrate the perfect purity of God, adds a negative to his affirmative, 'in him is no darkness at all;' that is, God is so pure, that not the least spot, the smallest speck of vanity or folly, can cleave to him. God is a pure, a most pure act, without the least potentiality, defectibility, or mutability, and therefore in the highest sense he 'is light, and in him is no darkness at all.' By this metaphorical description of God the apostle would not have us think that the nature of God is changed into the nature of light; but by this similitude the apostle would represent something of the purity and excellency of God to us. The sun is light, the moon is light, and the stars are light; but it would be blasphemy for us to imagine that the essence of God is the same with this of the creatures; but this, sirs! you must remember, that there are many excellent properties of light, for which God is often in the Scripture resembled to light. As

[1.] First, *Light is pure, and so is God:* Hab. i. 13, 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.' There are four things that God cannot do:

(1.) He cannot lie.

(2.) He cannot die.

(3.) He cannot deny himself, nor

(4.) He cannot look with a favourable eye upon iniquity. He is a God of that infinite purity, that he cannot look upon iniquity but with an hateful eye, an angry eye, a revengeful eye, and with a vindictive eye.

[2.] Secondly, *All things are conspicuous to the light, and so they are to God:*[1] Heb. iv. 13, 'Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.' The Greek word τετραχηλισμένα, is a metaphor, say some, that is taken from the priests under the law, who when they killed the beasts for sacrifice, all things that were within the beasts were laid naked and bare before the priest, that so he might see what was sound and what was corrupted. Others say, the apostle alludes to the anatomising of such creatures, wherein men are very cautious and curious to find out every little vein or muscle, though they lie never so close. Others say, that it is a metaphor taken from those that lie with their faces upwards, that all passengers may see who they are. All agree in this, that all men's insides and outsides are anatomised, dissected, quartered, and laid naked to the eye of God: Job xxxiv. 21, 22, 'For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.' 'If thou canst not hide thyself from the sun, which is God's minister of light, how impossible will it be to hide thyself from him whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun,' saith Ambrose. But,

[3.] Thirdly, *Without light nothing can be seen; so without the beams of heavenly light no heavenly things can be seen.* A man cannot see God, but in that light that comes down from above; a man cannot see

[1] Ps. xli. 12; 1 Sam. ii. 1, 3; Ps. xvi. 8; cxix. 168. God is *totus oculus*, all eye Athenodorus, an heathen, could say, that God was everywhere, and beheld all that was done.. [This Athenodorus was surnamed Cananites.—G.]

Christ without he be first enlightened by Christ; a man cannot see heaven, but in that light that comes from heaven, James i. 17, 1 Cor. ii. 10, 12, 14–16. Were it not for the sun, it would be perpetual night in the world, notwithstanding all the torches that could be lighted, yea, notwithstanding all the light of the moon and stars; so it would be perpetual night with poor souls, notwithstanding all the torchlight of natural parts, and creature comforts, and notwithstanding all the starlight of civil honesty and common gifts, and notwithstanding all the moonlight of temporary faith and formal profession, did not the Sun of righteousness arise and shine upon them. But,

[4.] Fourthly, *There is nothing more pleasant than the light:* Eccles. xi. 7, 'Truly the light is sweet, and it is a very pleasant thing to behold the sun.' A philosopher being asked whether it were not a pleasant thing to behold the sun? answered, that that was a blind man's question, because life without light is but a lifeless life. Now, as there is nothing more pleasant and delightful to the eye than light, so there is nothing more pleasant and delightful to the soul than God. The poor northern nations, in Strabo, that want the light of the sun for some months together, when the term of his return approaches, they climb up into the highest mountains to spy it; and he that spies it first was accounted the best and most beloved of God, they chose him king almost, as the Tyrians did Strato.[1] Now the return of the sun is not more pleasant and delightful to those poor northern nations, than God is pleasant and delightful to all gracious souls. But,

[5.] Fifthly, *The light shines and scatters its rays over all the world, over east, west, north, and south, and so doth the presence and goodness of God,* Ps. cxxxix. But,

[6.] Sixthly, *The light is a creature of a most resplendent beauty, lustre, and glory; it dazzles the eyes of the beholders; and so God is a God of that transcendent beauty, majesty, and glory, that the very eyes of the angels are dazzled, as not being able to behold the brightness of his glory:* Isa. vi. 2, 'God dwells in that light which no man can approach unto.' But,

[7.] Seventhly, and lastly, *The light of all bodies is the most incompound light; it will never mix with darkness; no more will God:* 2 Cor. vi. 14, 'What communion hath light with darkness?' The nature of God is void of all composition. Light expels darkness, it never mixes nor mingles with it. By what has been said, you see that God is a pure and an unmixed light, and that in him there is no darkness at all.

But now all worldly portions are mixed with many troubles, sorrows, cares, fears, hazards, dangers, vexations, oppositions, crosses, losses, and oftentimes with many gripes of conscience too. All earthly portions are mixed portions; the goodness of all creatures is a mixed goodness; our wine is mixed with water, our silver with tin, our gold with dross, our wheat with chaff, and our honey with gall, &c. Every bee hath his sting, and every rose hath his prickles; and this mixture speaks out all earthly portions to be 'vanity and vexation of spirit,' Eccles. i. 13.[2]

[1] See Justin, xviii. 3.—G.

[2] All earthly riches are true gardens of Adonis, where we can gather nothing but trivial flowers, surrounded with many briars and thorns.

That great prince Xerxes was wont to say, You look upon my crown and my purple robes, but did you know how they were lined with thorns, you would not stoop to take them up.[1] And who is there in this our English Israel that cannot with both hands subscribe to this? The emblem of King Henry the Seventh, in all his buildings, in the windows, was still a crown in a bush of thorns;[2] wherefore, or with what historical allusion he did so, is uncertain; but surely it was to imply thus much, that great places are not free from great cares, that no man knows the weight of a sceptre but he that sways it. This made Saul to hide himself amongst the stuff, when he should have been made king. Many a sleepless night, many a restless day, many a sad temptation, and many a busy shift,[3] will their ambition cost them, that affect such places of eminency. Besides, high places are commonly very slippery; he that stands in them may suddenly fall, and wound his conscience, or easily fall and break his neck. But,

(6.) *Sixthly*, As God is a pure and unmixed portion, so he is *a glorious, a happy, and a blessed portion*, Ps. xvi. 5, 6. He is so in himself, and he makes them so too who enjoy him for their portion: Ps. xxxiii. 12, 'Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.' All the happiness and blessedness of the people of God stands in this, that God is their God, and that he is their portion, and that they are his inheritance. The Hebrew word *ashrei*, that is here rendered *blessed*, is, Oh the blessedness! or Oh the heaped up happiness of those whose God is the Lord! The happiness of such is so great and so glorious, as cannot be conceived, as cannot be uttered. The words are a joyful acclamation for their felicity that have God for their portion: Ps. cxliv. 15, 'Happy is that people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.' David having prayed for many temporal blessings in the behalf of the people, from ver. 12 to ver. 15, at last concludes, 'Blessed are the people that are in such a case;' but presently he checks and corrects himself, and eats, as it were, his own words, but rather, 'happy is that people whose God is the Lord.' The Syriac rendereth it question-wise, 'Is not the people [happy] that is in such a case?' The answer is, '*No*,' except they have God to boot, Ps. cxlvi. 5. Nothing can make that man truly miserable that hath God for his portion, nor nothing can make that man truly happy that wants God for his portion. God is the author of all true happiness; he is the donor of all true happiness; he is the maintainer of all true happiness, and he is the centre of all true happiness and blessedness; and, therefore, he that hath him for his God, for his portion, is the only happy man in the world.[4]

But now all earthly portions cannot make a man truly happy and blessed. A crown, a kingdom cannot; for Saul and other princes have found it so. Honours cannot; for Haman and others have found it so. A high and noble birth cannot; for Absalom, Amnon, and others have found it so. Riches cannot; for the rich fool in the Gospel, and many thousand others, have found it so. Large dominions and great commands cannot; for Ahasuerus, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and others,

[1] Plutarch: Xerxes.—G. [2] B. Hall. [3] 'Expedient'.—G.

[4] If a man should make a critical inquiry after true happiness, from the highest angel in heaven to the lowest worm on earth, the joint voice of all the creatures would be, that happiness is not in them.

have found it so. Policy cannot; for Ahithophel and other great counsellors have found it so. Glorious apparel and delicate fare cannot; for Dives and others have found it so. Applause and credit among the people cannot; for Herod and others have found it so. Learning and great gifts cannot; for the scribes and pharisees, and many others, have found it so. No earthly thing, nor earthly creature, can give happiness nor blessedness to man. *Non dat quod non habet*, nothing can give what it hath not. If the conduit hath no water, it can give no water; if the sun hath no light, it can give no light; if the physician hath no remedy, he can give no remedy, &c.

But now it is a very true observation, though it be a very sad observation, viz., *That every wicked man's portion is cursed unto him.*

Do but compare the scriptures in the margin together,[1] and then let conscience judge. All a wicked man's relations are cursed to him, and all a wicked man's contentments and enjoyments are cursed to him, and all his mercies within doors are cursed to him, &c. What though a man should match with one that hath many thousand bags of gold for her portion, yet if the plague should be in every bag, would you count him happy in this match? Surely no. Verily this is the case of every man that hath not God for his portion. But

(7.) *Seventhly*, As God is a glorious portion, so he is *a peculiar portion*, he is a portion peculiar to his people, Ps. cxlii. 5, 6; Jer. x. 16. This is evident in the text, and in all the scriptures cited to prove the point, Ps. xvi. 5, and so in that Ps. lxvii. 6, 'Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us:' and so Ps. lxviii. 20, 'He that is our God is the God of salvation,' or 'God of salvations,' as it is in the Hebrew. God is a God of all manner of salvations; he hath all sorts and ways of salvations; he is not only powerful, but also skilful, to save his people from ten thousand deaths and dangers. Faith is an appropriating grace, it is much in appropriating of God to itself: 'My Lord and my God,' and my Redeemer and my Saviour and my portion;[2] Ps. lxxiii. 26, 'My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.' In Gideon's camp every soldier had his own pitcher, Judges vii. 16; amongst Solomon's men of valour, every man wore his own sword, 1 Chron. xxvi. 30; and the five wise virgins had every one oil in her own lamp, Mat. xxv. 4. Luther was wont to say, that there lay a great deal of divinity couched up in pronouns, as in *meum*, *tuum*, *suum*, mine, thine, his: and so faith's appropriating of God to the soul, as its own portion, is all in all. God is a portion peculiar to the saints; he is the hidden manna, the new name, the white stone, the bread to eat that others know not of. There is never a hardened Pharaoh in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion;' nor there is never a murdering Saul in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion;' nor there is never a painted bloody Jezebel in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion;' nor there is never a cunning Ahithophel in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion;' nor there is never a proud Haman in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion;' nor there is never a tyrannical Nebuchadnezzar in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my por-

[1] Deut. xxviii. 17–20; Job xx. 22–29, and chap. xxiv. 18; Prov. iii. 33; Mal. ii. 2, &c. [2] John xx. 28; Job xix. 25; Luke i. 47.

tion;' nor there is never a crafty Herod in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion;' nor there is never a rich Dives in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion;' nor there is never a treacherous Judas in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion;' nor there is never an hypocritical Simon Magus in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion;' nor there is never an apostatizing Demas in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion;' nor there is never a persecuting scribe or pharisee in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion.' It is only the saint that can truly say, 'The Lord is his portion,' for God is peculiarly his, he is only his.

But now all earthly portions are common portions; they are all common to good and bad, to the righteous and to the wicked, to the clean and to the unclean, to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not, to him that sweareth and to him that feareth an oath, Eccles. ix. 1–3. Was Abraham rich? so was Dives too; was David a king? so was Saul too; was Daniel a great favourite at court? so was Haman too, &c. And indeed usually the basest and the worst of men have the largest share in earthly portions; which made Luther say, that the whole Turkish empire was but a crust that God cast to a dog. Abraham gave unto his sons of the concubines gifts, and sent them away, but unto Isaac he gave all that he had, Gen. xxv. 5, 6. So all earthly portions, which are giftless gifts, God gives them to the worst and vilest of men; Daniel iv. 17, 'This matter is by decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones; to the intent that the living may know, that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men;' and so in that Daniel xi. 31, 'And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom, but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.' Interpreters do generally agree, that by this vile person in the text is meant Antiochus Epiphanes, that was so great and mighty a prince, that when the Samaritans did write to him, they write, *Antiocho magno deo,* to Antiochus the great god. And indeed his very name speaks him out to be some great and glorious person, for *Antiochus Epiphanes* is Antiochus the illustrious, the famous; and yet you see that the Holy Ghost, speaking of him, calls him a vile person Ah! how vile in the eyes of God are the greatest men in the world who have not God for their portion! Augustus in his solemn feasts gave trifles to some, but gold to others. God gives the trifling portions of this world to the vilest and worst of men, but his gold, his Christ, himself, he gives only to his saints: Gal. ii. 20, 'And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' Haws,[1] that are for hogs, grow upon every hedge; but roses, that are for men, they only grow in pleasant gardens; you know how to apply it. Though many have counterfeit jewels, yet there are but a few that have the true diamond; though many have their earthly portions, yet there are but a few that have God for their portion. But,

(8.) *Eighthly,* As God is a peculiar portion, so he is a *universal*

[1] Fruit of the hawthorn.—G.

portion. He is a portion that includes all other portions. God hath himself the good, the sweet, the profit, the pleasure, the delight, the comfort, &c., of all portions.[1] There is no good in wife, child, father, friend, husband, health, wealth, wit, wisdom, learning, honour, &c., but is all found in God: Rev. xxi. 7, 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son;' or as the Greek hath it, ὁ νικῶν, he that is overcoming, though he hath not yet overcome, yet if he be striving for the conquest, and will rather die than he will give up the bucklers, 'he shall inherit all things;' that is, he shall inherit God in all and all in God:[2] Gen. xxxiii. 9, 'And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself;' as the Hebrew hath it, *Li Rab*, 'I have much, my brother.' And indeed it was very much that an Esau should say he had much; it is more than many of the Esaus of these times will say. But Jacob speaks at a far higher rate in ver. 11: 'Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee, because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough;' or rather, as the Hebrew hath it, *Li chol*, I have all. Esau had much, but Jacob had all, because he had all in God, and God in all. *Habet omnia qui habet habentem omnia*, he hath all that hath the haver of all: 2 Cor. vi. 10, 'As having nothing, and yet possessing all things.' There is in God an immense fulness, an ocean of goodness, and an overplus of all that graciousness, sweetness, and kindness that is to be found in all other things or creatures. As Noah had a copy of every kind of creature in that famous library of the ark, out of which all were reprinted to the world, so he that hath God for his portion hath the original copy of all blessings, out of which all may easily be renewed. All the goodlinesses and all the glories of all the creatures are eminently and perfectly to be enjoyed in God. God is an universal excellency. All the particular excellencies that are scattered up and down among angels, men, and all other creatures, are virtually and transcendently in him, he hath them all in his own being, Ephes. i. 3.[3] All creatures in heaven and earth have but their particular excellencies; but God hath in himself the very quintessence of all excellencies. The creatures have but drops of that sea, that ocean, that is in God, they have but their parts of that power, wisdom, goodness, righteousness, holiness, faithfulness, loveliness, desirableness, sweetness, graciousness, beauty, and glory that is in God. One hath this part, and another hath that; one hath this particular excellency, and another hath that; but the whole of all these parts and excellencies are to be found only in God. There is none but that God, that is an universal good, that can truly say, All power, all wisdom, all strength, all knowledge, all goodness, all sweetness, all beauty, all glory, all excellency, &c., dwells in me. He that can truly say this, is a god, and he that cannot is no god. There is no angel in heaven, nor saint on earth, that hath the whole of any one of those excellencies that are in God; nay, all the angels in heaven, and all the saints on earth, have not among them the whole of any one of those glorious excellencies and perfections that be in God. All the excellencies that are scattered up

[1] Rom. viii. 32, God is the *bonum in quo omnia bona.*

[2] *Qui habet hoc unum, habet unum universale.*

[3] When Paulinus Nolanus, a great man, had his city taken away from him by the barbarians, he prayed thus: Lord, let me not be troubled at the loss of my gold, silver, honour, &c., for thou art all, and much more than all these to me. [See Index *sub nomine.*—G.]

and down in the creatures, are united into one excellency in God; but there is not one excellency in God that is fully scattered up and down among all the creatures. There is a glorious union of all excellencies in God, and only in God.

Now this God, that is such an universal good, and that hath all excellencies dwelling in himself, he says to the believer, as the king of Israel said to the king of Assyria, 'I am thine, and all that I have,' 1 Kings xx. 4. Our propriety reacheth to all that God is, and to all that God hath, Jer, xxxii. 38, 42 God is not parted, nor divided, nor distributed among his people, as earthly portions are divided among children in the family; so as one believer hath one part of God, and another believer hath another part of God, and a third another part of God; oh no, but every believer hath whole God wholly, he hath all of God for his portion. God is not a believer's portion in a limited sense, nor in a comparative sense, but in an absolute sense. God himself is theirs, he is wholly theirs, he is only theirs, he is always theirs. As Christ looks upon the Father, and saith, 'All thine is mine, and mine is thine,' 1 Cor. iii, 28, Joh. xvii. 10, that may a saint say, looking upon God as his portion. He may truly say, O Lord, thou art mine, and all that thou hast; and I am thine, and all that I have. A saint may look upon God and say, O Lord, not only thy gifts but thy graces are mine, to adorn me and enrich me; and not only thy mercies and thy good things are mine to comfort me, and encourage me, but also thou thyself art mine; and this is my joy and crown of rejoicing. To be able to say that God is mine, is more than if I were able to say that ten thousand worlds, yea, and as many heavens, are mine; for it is God alone that is the sparkling diamond in the ring of glory. Heaven would be but a low thing without God, saith Augustine; and Bernard had rather enjoy Christ in a chimney-corner, than to be in heaven without him; and Luther had rather be in hell with Christ, than in heaven without him. It is God alone that makes heaven to be heaven.

Now God is so every particular believer's portion, as that he is every believer's portion: 1 Cor. i. 1, 2 'Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of God, which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours.' As the sun is every man's sun to see by, to walk by, to work by; and as the sea is every man's sea to trade by, &c.; so God is every believer's portion. He is a poor saint's portion as well as a rich saint's portion; he is the despised believer's portion, as well as the exalted believer's portion; he is the weak believer's portion, as well as the strong believer's portion; he was as much his portion who miscalled his faith, and who in the behalf of his son cried out with tears, 'Lord, I believe, help my unbelief,' Mark xi. 24, as he was Abraham's portion, who, in the strength of his faith, offered up his only son, Gen. xxii.; he was as much Job's portion sitting on a dunghill, as he was David's portion sitting on a royal throne; he was as much Lazarus his portion, that had never a penny in his purse, as he was Solomon's portion, who made gold and silver as plenteous in Jerusalem as the stones of the streets, 2 Chron. i. 15. God is not my portion alone, but he is every saint's portion in heaven, and he is every saint's portion on earth. The father

is every child's portion, and though they may wrangle and quarrel, and fall out one with another, yet he is all their portions; and so it is here; and oh what a spring of joy and comfort should this be to all the saints. Riches are not every believer's portion, but God is every believer's portion; honour and preferment in the world is not every believer's portion, but God is every believer's portion; liberty and freedom is not every believer's portion, but God is every believer's portion; credit and applause in the world is not every believer's portion, but God is every believer's portion; prosperity and success is not every believer's portion, but God is every believer's portion, &c.

God is a universal portion, all things receive their being, essence, and existence from him, for the fulness of all things is in him, really and eminently. The heathen philosophers of old called God τό πᾶν, *i. e.* all or everything, and in that oracle 'great Pan is dead,' of which Plutarch makes mention. Christ is called the greater Pan, because, say some, he is the Lord of all, and containeth all things in himself: Exod. xxxiii. 19, 'I will make all my goodness pass before thee,' to wit, because in God are all good things, God is all things, God is everything. The cream, the good, the sweet, the beauty, and the glory of every creature, and of every thing, centres in God. But,

(9.) *Ninthly*, As God is an universal portion, so God is *a safe portion, a secure portion.* He is a portion that none can rob or wrong you of; he is a portion that none can touch or take from you: he is a portion that none can cheat or spoil you of. God is such a portion, that no friend, no foe, no man, no enemy, no devil can ever rob a Christian of.[1] O Christians, God is so yours in Christ, and so yours by covenant, and so yours by promise, and so yours by purchase, and so yours by conquest, and so yours by donation, and so yours by marriage union and communion, and so yours by the earnest of the Spirit, and so yours by the feelings and witnessings of the Spirit, that no power or policy on earth can ever finger your portion, or cheat, or rob you of your portion: Ps. xlviii. 14, 'For this God is our God for ever and ever, and he will be our guide even unto death.' He is not only our God for the present, nor he will not be only our God for a short time longer; oh no, but he will be our God for ever and ever. If God be once thy portion, he will be for ever thy portion. It must be a power that must over-match the power of God, and a strength that must be above the strength of God, that must rob or spoil a Christian of his portion; but who is there that is stronger than God? Is the clay stronger than the potter, or the stubble than the flame, or weakness than strength? yea, is not the very weakness of God stronger than man? and who then shall ever be able to take away a Christian's portion from him? Rom. ix., 1 Cor. i. 25, and chap. x. 22.

But now a man may be easily deprived of his earthly portion. How many have been deprived of their earthly portions by storms at sea, and others by force and violence, and others by fraud and deceit, and others by hideous lying and hellish swearing? Many have lost their earthly portions by treachery, knavery, perjury, subtilty, robbery, &c. Some play away their earthly portions, and others with Esau fool away their earthly portions, and not a few, with the prodigal, sin away their earthly

[1] These things I have formerly handled more largely, and, therefore, a touch here must suffice, &c.

portions. Ahab's fingers itched to be a-fingering of Naboth's vineyard. 1 Kings xxi. 1-5. A man can no sooner come to enjoy an earthly portion, but other men's fingers itch to be a-fingering of his portion, as daily experience doth sufficiently evidence. But God is a portion that the fire cannot burn, nor the floods cannot drown, nor the thief cannot steal, nor the enemy cannot sequester, nor the soldier cannot plunder a Christian of. A man may take away my gold from me, but he cannot take away my God from me. The Chaldeans and the Sabeans could take away Job's estate from him, but they could not take away Job's God from him, Job i. And the Amalekites burnt Ziklag, and robbed David of his substance, and of his wives, but they could not rob him of his God, 1 Sam. xxx. And those persecutors in the 10th and 11th chapters of the Hebrews plundered the saints of their goods, but they could not plunder them of their God. Till weakness can make a breach upon strength, impotency upon omnipotency, the pitcher upon the potter, and the crawling worm upon the Lord of hosts, a saint's portion is safe and secure. It is true, sickness and disease may take away my health and my strength from me, and death may take away my friends and my relations from me, and enemies may take away my estate, my liberty, my life from me; but none of all these can take away my God from me. I have read of the men of Tyrus, how that they chained and nailed their god Apollo to a post, that so they might be sure of him, supposing that all their safety lay in the enjoyment of him. Certainly God is so chained, and so linked, and so nailed to his people by his everlasting love, and by his everlasting covenant, and by the blood of his Son, and by his oath, and by that law of relation that is between him and them, that no created power shall ever be able to deprive them of him. But,

(10.) *Tenthly,* As God is a safe portion, a secure portion, so he is a *suitable portion,* Ps. iv. 6-7. No object is so suitable and adequate to the heart as he is. He is a portion that punctually, exactly, and directly suits the condition of the soul, that suits the desires of the soul, the necessities of the soul, the wants of the soul, the longings of the soul, and the prayers of the soul. The soul can crave nothing, nor wish for nothing, but what is to be found in this portion. Here is light to enlighten the soul, and wisdom to counsel the soul, and power to support the soul, and goodness to supply the soul, and mercy to pardon the soul, and beauty to delight the soul, and glory to ravish the soul, and fulness to fill the soul, &c. Health is not more suitable to the sick man, nor wealth to the poor man, nor bread to the hungry man, nor drink to the thirsty man, nor clothes to the naked man, nor balm to the wounded man, nor ease to the tormented man, nor health to the diseased man, nor a pardon to the condemned man, nor a guide to the blind man, &c. than this portion is suitable to all the necessities of man; and this speaks out the excellency of this portion above all other portions. Now there is no earthly portion that can suit an immortal soul; he is a fool upon record that said, 'Soul, thou hast goods laid up for many years, take ease, eat, drink, and be merry,' Luke xii. 18–20. If the man, saith Ambrose upon the words, had the soul of a swine, what could he have said more? for those things were more suitable to swine than they were to an immortal soul. Man's soul is a spiritual and immortal substance, it is capable of union and communion with God; it is capable of a choice

enjoyment of God here, and of an eternal fruition of God hereafter. A great shoe will not fit a little foot, nor a great sail a little ship, nor a great ring a little finger; no more will any earthly portion suit an immortal soul. The soul is the breath of God, the beauty of man, the wonder of angels, and the envy of devils. It is of an angelical nature; it is an heavenly spark, a celestial plant, and of a divine offspring. So that nothing can suit the soul below God, nor nothing can satisfy the soul without God. The soul is so high and so noble a piece, that all the riches of the east and west Indies, nor rocks of diamonds, nor mountains of gold, can fill it, or satisfy it, or suit it.

When a man is in prison, and condemmed to die, if one should come to him, and tell him, that there is such a friend or such a relation that hath left him a very fair estate, a brave seat, &c., yet all this would not please him, nor joy him, because it doth not suit his present condition; oh, but now let a man bring him his pardon, sealed under his prince's hand, oh how will this delight him and joy him! And so tell a man that is ready to starve, that such and such loves him, and that such and such intends well towards him, &c., yet all this doth not take him, it doth not satisfy him, and all because it doth not suit him; oh but now do but bring him food to eat, and this will joy him and delight him, and all because it suits him. That is the highest good, that is the most suitable good to the soul, and such a good is God; that is the most excellent portion, that is the most suitable portion to the soul, and such a portion is God. But,

(11.) *Eleventhly,* As God is a suitable portion, so he is *an incomprehensible portion.* No created understanding can comprehend what a portion God is, Ps. cxlvii. 5, Job xxvi. 14. It is true God is not incomprehensible, in regard of his own understanding, for he perfectly understands himself, else he could not be God; but God is incomprehensible in regard of us, and the angels, who are no ways able to comprehend infiniteness: 1 Kings viii. 27, 'But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded!'[1] God is an infinite being, and therefore he cannot be contained in any place, nor comprehended by any created being. Such multiplied phrases and Hebraisms as are here, as heaven, and the heaven of heavens, do very emphatically set out the immensity and incomprehensibleness of God: Job xxxvii. 23, 'Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out.' We are as well able to comprehend the sea in a cockle-shell, as we are able to comprehend God. God is above all name, all notion, and all comprehension. God is so incomprehensible, that you shall as soon tell the stars of heaven, and number the sand of the sea, and stop the sun in his course, and raise the dead, and make a world, as you shall be able to comprehend the infiniteness of God's essence: Ps. cxlv. 3, 'His greatness is unsearchable.' The most perfect knowledge that we can have of God is, that we cannot perfectly know him, because we do know him to be infinitely and incomprehensibly perfect: Rom. xi. 33, 'Oh the depth both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways

[1] Aristotle, that great secretary of nature, being not able to comprehend the reason of the sea's ebbing and flowing, cast himself into it; oh how much less able was he to comprehend God, blessed for ever!

past finding out! When men and angels do search farthest into God's perfection, they do then most of all discover their own imperfection; for it is utterly impossible for angels or men, by their most accurate disquisition, to find out the Almighty to perfection, 1 Tim. vi. 16, 'who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see.' Here is a denial both of the fact and the possibility. It is a good observation of Chrysostom on the words, *Diligentiæ Pauli attende, non dicit lucem incomprehensibilem, &c.* Observe the diligence of Paul, he doth not say a light incomprehensible, but a light inaccessible, which is much more; for that which, being sought and searched for, cannot be comprehended, we say is incomprehensible; but that which suffereth not by any means the labour of searching after, and which no one can come near, that is inaccessible. There is infinitely more in God than the tongues of men or angels can express.[1] There is much in God beyond the apprehension and comprehension of all created beings. The sum of all that philosophers and schoolmen have attained to concerning this great principle, amounts to no more than this, viz., that men and angels can never comprehend that perfection which dwells in God; for the perfection of God is infinite, and therefore incomprehensible. God, saith Dionysius, is a super-substantial substance, an understanding not to be understood, a word never to be spoken.

When one was asked what God was, he answered, that he must be God himself, before he could know God fully.

When the tyrant Hiero asked the poet Simonides what God was,[2] he craved a day to study an answer; but the more he sought into the nature of God, the more difficult he found it to express; the next day, after being questioned, he asked two days, and the third time he craved four, and so went on, doubling the number; and being asked why he did so, he answered, that the more he studied the nature of God, the less he was able to define what God was. He being so incomprehensible in his nature, the more this poor heathen inquired, the more he admired, and the less he understood.

It was a notable observation of Chrysostom, who being very busy and studious in searching into the nature of God, saith, I am like a man digging in a deep spring; I stand here, and the water riseth upon me; and I stand there, and still the water riseth upon me. Indeed, this is a knowledge that passeth knowledge, Ephes. iii. 19.

The Turks build their mosques[3] or churches without any roof, because they hold as we do, that God is incomprehensible. God is a circle whose centre is everywhere, and whose circumference is nowhere, all which speaks out his infiniteness and incomprehensibleness.

But now all earthly portions are easily apprehended and comprehended. A portion in money, or plate, or goods, or lands, or jewels, is easily cast up, and so many hundreds or thousands a year are quickly told. There are few, except it be children or fools, but can readily give an account of all earthly portions. The child's portion, and the wife's portion, and the servant's portion, and the soldier's portion, and the poor man's portion,

[1] If one man had all the reason, gifts, graces, and excellencies that are in angels and men, yet would he never be able to comprehend an incomprehensible God.

[2] *Simonides apud Ciceronem de Nat. Deoorum*, lib i.

[3] Spelling, 'Mosches,'—G.

and the rich man's portion, are talked on all the city over, and all the town over, and all the country over; but God is such an incomprehensible portion, that there is not a man in town, city, or country that is able to comprehend him, Prov. iii. 15. But,

(12.) *Twelfthly*, As God is an incomprehensible portion, so God is *an inexhaustible portion;* a portion that can never be spent, that can never be exhausted; a fountain that still overflows; a rich mine that hath no bottom; a spring that can never be drawn dry, but continues always full, without augmentation or diminution: John iv. 14, 'But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.' If grace in the soul be such a perpetual flowing fountain, that it shall never be exhausted till grace be swallowed up in glory, then certainly the God of grace is much more an inexhaustible fountain that can never be drawn dry. Angels, saints, and sinners have lived upon this portion almost this six thousand years, and it is not in the least diminished, Col. i. 16, 17. God hath his city-house, and his country-house, where millions have been kept at his table, and lived upon his purse, his charge, even days without number, and yet God is not one penny the poorer for all this. This portion is like the meal in the barrel, and the oil in the cruse, which never failed: 1 Kings xvii. 14-16, 'For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord which he spake by Elijah.' God is such a portion as cannot be wasted nor diminished; he is such a portion as can never fail. Should all Christians now live to the age of the patriarchs, who lived many hundred years, and should they all live freely, and keep open house every day in the year, yet at the end, not a dram, not a penny, no not a farthing of this portion will be expended or diminished.

Though men have never so great a stock, yet if they still spend upon it they will certainly consume it; oh, but God is such a stock as can never be spent, as can never be consumed. If a sparrow should but fetch a drop of water out of the sea once a day, yea, once in a thousand years, yet in time it would be exhausted; oh but God is such a sea, such an ocean, that if every angel in heaven, and every saint and sinner on earth, should drink whole rivers at a draught, yet not one drop could be diminished. If a child should take but a cockle-shell of water out of the sea every day, the sea would be really the less, though not visibly the less, and in time it would be exhausted, and drawn dry; but let all created beings be every day a-drawing from God, yet they shall never lessen him, they shall never draw him dry. The mother's breasts are often drawn dry, but the more you draw at the breasts of God, the more milk of grace and comfort will flow in upon you: Isaiah lxvi. 10, 11, 'Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be ye glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for thy joy with her, all ye that mourn for her; that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolation; that you may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.' God keeps open house for all comers and goers, for all created creatures both in heaven and earth; and

though they are perpetually sucking at his breasts, yet the more they draw, the more the heavenly milk of divine joy, content, and satisfaction flows in abundantly upon them, Ps. civ. 24. All creatures, both high and low, rich and poor, honourable and base, noble and ignoble, bond and free, Jews and Gentiles, are all maintained upon God's own cost and charge; they are all fed at his table, and maintained by what comes out of his treasury, his purse; and yet God is not a pin the poorer for all this. It would break and beggar all the princes on earth, to keep but one day the least part of that innumerable company that God feeds, and clothes, and cherishes, and maintains every day upon the account of his own revenue, which is never the poorer for all the vast expenses that he is daily at. There is still in God a fulness of abundance, and a fulness of redundance, notwithstanding the vast sums that he hath, and doth daily expend. It were blasphemy to think that God should be a penny the poorer by all that he hath laid out for the maintenance of those millions of angels and men, that have had their dependence upon him, from their first creation to this very day. Look, as the sun hath never the less light for filling the stars with light, and as the fountain hath never the less water for filling the lesser vessels with water that are about it; so though God fills all the vessels, both of grace and glory, with his own fulness, yet he is never the less full himself; there is still in God *plenitudo fontis*, the fulness of a fountain. Look, as the overflowing fountain pours out water abundantly, and yet after all it remains full; so though the Lord be such an overflowing fountain as that he fills all, yet still he retains all fulness in himself.

I have read of a Spanish ambassador, that, coming to see the treasury of Saint Mark in Venice, that is so much cried up in the world, he fell a-groping at the bottom of the chests and trunks, to see whether they had any bottom; and being asked the reason why he did so, answered in this among other things, My master's treasure differs from yours, and excels yours, in that his hath no bottom as yours have, alluding to the mines in Mexico, Peru, and other parts of the western India. All men's mints, bags, purses, and coffers may be quickly exhausted and drawn dry, but God is such an inexhaustible portion, that he can never be drawn dry; all God's treasures are bottomless, and all his mints are bottomless, and all his bags are bottomless. Millions of thousands in heaven and earth feed every day upon him, and yet he feels it not; he is still a-giving, and yet his purse is never empty; he is still a-filling all the court of heaven, and all the creatures on earth, and yet he is a fountain that still overflows. There be them that say, that it is most certainly true of the oil at Rheims, that though it be continually spent in the inauguration of their kings of France, yet it never wastes; but whatever truth is in this story, of this I am most sure, that though all the creatures in both worlds live and spend continually on Christ's stock, yet it never wasteth.

But now all earthly portions are frequently exhausted and drawn dry. The prodigal quickly spent his patrimony upon his harlots, Luke xv.; and how many drunkards, and gluttons, and wantons, and gamesters, and roysters, &c., do daily bring a noble to ninepence! Prov. xxiii. 20, 21. 'Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?' saith God to Job, chap. xxxviii. 22, &c. Now, saith Gregory, the treasures of the snow are

worldly riches, which men rake together, even as children do snow, which the next shower washeth away, and leaves nothing in the room of it but dirt. And ah! how many merchants, and shopkeepers, and others in these breaking times, have found all their riches and earthly portions to melt away as snow before the sun! how many of late have been very rich one week, and stripped of all the next, and set with Job upon the dunghill! All earthly portions are like water in a cistern, that may easily and quickly be drawn dry; but God is an inexhaustible portion, that can never be drawn dry; and this discovers the excellency of this portion above all other portions. But

(13.) *Thirteenthly,* As God is an inexhaustible portion, so God is *a soul-satisfying portion,* Ps. xvii. 15. He is a portion that gives the soul full satisfaction and content: Ps. xvi. 5, 6, 'The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.' It was well with him as his heart could wish. And so in that Ps. lxxiii. 25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee;' or as some render it, 'I would I were in heaven with thee'; or as others read the words, 'I have sought none in heaven or earth besides thee;' or as others, 'I desire none in heaven or earth besides thee,' or 'I affect none in heaven, nor none on earth like thee; I love none in heaven, nor none on earth, in comparison of thee; I esteem thee instead of all other treasure, and above all other treasures that are in heaven, or that are on earth.'[1] The holy prophet had spiritual and sweet communion with Christ to comfort and strengthen him; he had a guard of glorious angels to protect him and secure him, and he had assurance of heaven in his bosom to joy and rejoice him; and yet it was none of these, nay, it was not all these together, that could satisfy him, it was only an infinite good, an infinite God, that could satisfy him. He very well knew that the substantials of all true happiness and blessedness did lie in God, and his enjoyment of God, It was not his high dignities nor honours that could satisfy him; it was not the strength, riches, security, prosperity, and outward glory of his kingdom that could satisfy him; it was not his delightful music, nor his noble attendance, nor his well furnished tables, nor his great victories, nor his stately palaces, nor his pleasant gardens, nor his beautiful wife, nor his lovely children, that could satisfy him; all these without God could never satisfy him; but God without all these was enough to quiet him, and satisfy him: John xiv. 8, 'Philip said unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.' A sight of God will satisfy a gracious soul more than all worldly contentments and enjoyments, yea, one sight of God will satisfy a saint more than all the glory of heaven will do. God is the glory of heaven. Heaven alone is not sufficient to content a gracious soul, but God alone is sufficient to content and satisfy a gracious soul. God only is that satisfying good, that is able to fill, quiet, content, and satisfy an immortal soul. Certainly, if there be enough in God to satisfy the spirits of just men made perfect, whose capacities are far greater than ours, Heb. xii. 23–25; and if there be enough in God to satisfy the angels, whose capacities are far above theirs; if there be enough in God to satisfy Jesus Christ, whose capacity is un-

[1] Vide Jerome, Calvin, Cajetan, Marlorat, Mollerus, &c.

conceivable and unexpressible; yea, if there be enough in God to satisfy himself, then certainly there must needs be in God enough to satisfy the souls of his people. If all fulness, and all goodness and infiniteness will satisfy the soul, then God will. There is nothing beyond God imaginable, nor nothing beyond God desirable, nor nothing beyond God delectable; and therefore the soul that enjoys him, cannot but be satisfied with him. God is a portion beyond all imagination, all expectation, all apprehension, and all comparison; and therefore he that hath him cannot but sit down and say, I have enough, Gen. xxxiii. 11: Ps. lxiii. 5, 6, 'My soul shall be satisfied as with[1] marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips; when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches.' Marrow and fatness cannot so satisfy the appetite, as God can satisfy a gracious soul; yea, one smile from God, one glance of his countenance, one good word from heaven, one report of love and grace, will infinitely more satisfy an immortal soul, than all the fat, and all the marrow, and all the dainties and delicates of this world can satisfy the appetite of any mortal man. 'My soul shall be satisfied with fatness and fatness'; so the Hebrew hath it; that is, my soul shall be topful of comfort, it shall be filled up to the brim with pleasure and delight, in the remembrance and enjoyment of God upon my bed, or upon my beds, in the plural, as the Hebrew hath it. David had many a hard bed and many a hard lodging, whilst he was in his wilderness condition. It oftentimes so fell out that he had nothing but the bare ground for his bed, and the stones for his pillows, and the hedges for his curtains, and the heavens for his canopy; yet in this condition God was sweeter than marrow and fatness to him; though his bed was never so hard, yet in God he had full satisfaction and content: Jer. xxxi. 14, 'My people shall be satisfied with goodness, saith the Lord; and 'my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus,' Philip. iv. 19, saith Paul, that great apostle of the Gentiles. The Greek word πληρώσει signifies to *fill up*, even as he did the widow's vessels, 2 Kings iv. 4, till they did overflow. God will fill up all, he will make up all, he will supply all the wants and necessities of his people. That water that can fill the sea, can much more fill a cup; and that sun which can fill the world with light, can much more fill my house with light. So that God that fills heaven and earth with his glory, can much more fill my soul with his glory. To shew what a satisfying portion God is, he is set forth by all those things that may satisfy the heart of man, as by bread, water, wine, milk, honours, riches, raiment, houses, lands, friends, father, mother, sister, brother, health, wealth, light, life, &c. And if these things will not satisfy, what will? It is enough, says old Jacob, that Joseph is alive, Gen. xlv. 28; so says a gracious soul, It is enough that God is my portion. A pardon cannot more satisfy a condemned man, nor bread an hungry man, nor drink a thirsty man, nor clothes a naked man, nor health a sick man, &c., than God doth satisfy a gracious man. But,

Now worldly portions can never satisfy the souls of men, Eccles. v. 10. 'He that loveth silver shall never be satisfied with silver; nor he that

[1] *Cheleb vade shen*, fat and fat; so the Hebrew hath it; and hereby is meant satiety of pleasures, &c.

loveth abundance with increase. This is also vanity.'[1] All the world cannot fill the soul, nor all the creatures in the world cannot stock the soul with complete satisfaction. As nothing can be the perfection of the soul but he that made it, so nothing can be the satisfaction of the soul but he that made it. If a man be hungry, silver cannot feed him; if naked, it cannot clothe him; if cold, it cannot warm him; if sick, it cannot recover him; if wounded, it cannot heal him; if weak, it cannot strengthen him; if fallen, it cannot raise him; if wandering, it cannot reduce him; oh how much less able is it then to satisfy him! He that, out of love to silver, seeketh after silver, shall love still to seek it, but shall never be satisfied with it. A man shall as soon satisfy the grave, and satisfy hell, and satisfy the stomach with wind, as he shall be able to satisfy his soul with any earthly portion. All earthly portions are dissatisfying portions, they do but vex and fret, gall and grieve, tear and torment, the souls of men. The world is a circle, and the heart of man is a triangle, and no triangle can fill a circle.[2] Some good or other will be always wanting to that man that hath only outward good to live upon. Absalom's beauty could not satisfy him, nor Haman's honour could not satisfy him, nor Ahab's kingdom could not satisfy him, nor Balaam's gold could not satisfy him, nor Ahithophel's policy could not satisfy him, nor the scribes and pharisees' learning could not satisfy them, nor Dives's riches could not satisfy him, nor Alexander's conquests could not satisfy him; for when, as he thought, he had conquered one world, he sits down and wishes for another world to conquer; and Cyrus the Persian king was wont to say, did men but know the cares which he sustained under his imperial crown, he thought no man would stoop to take it up.[3] Gilimex, king of the Vandals, when he was led in triumph by Belisarius, cried out, 'Vanity of vanity, all is vanity.' Charles the fifth, emperor of Germany, whom of all men the world judged most happy, cried out with detestation to all his honours, riches, pleasures, trophies, *Abite hinc, abite longe*, get you hence, let me hear no more of you. And it hath been long since said of our King Henry the second,

> 'He whom, alive, the world could scarce suffice,
> When dead, in eight-foot earth contented lies.'[4]

By all these instances, it is most evident that no earthly portions can satisfy the souls of men. Can a man fill up his chest with air? or can he fill up the huge ocean with a drop of water? or can a few drops of beer quench the thirst of a man in a burning fever? or can the smell of meat, or the reeking fume of a ladle, or dreaming of a banquet, satisfy an hungry stomach? No! no more can any earthly portions fill or satisfy the heart of man. If emptiness can fill the soul, if vanity can satisfy the soul, or if vexation can give content to the soul, then may earthly portions satisfy the soul, but not till then. When a man can gather grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles, and turn day into night, and winter into summer, then shall he find satisfaction in the creatures; but not before. All earthly portions are weighed in the balance of the

[1] Some read the words thus: He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, and he that loveth it in the multitude of it shall not have fruit.

[2] If the whole world were changed into a globe of gold, it could not fill one heart, it could not satisfy one immortal soul. [3] Ascribed to Xerxes; Plutarch.—G.

[4] Fuller's Church History, book iii. cent. xii. sec. vii. from Matthew Paris, p. 151.—G.

sanctuary, and they are found to be lighter than the dust of the balance; and this will rather inflame the thirst than quench it.

A man that hath only the world for his portion, is like to Noah's dove out of the ark, that was in continual motion, but could find no resting place; but a man that hath God for his portion is like the dove, returning and resting in the ark, The soul can never be at rest, till it comes to rest and centre in God.[1] God himself is the soul's only home, no good but the chiefest good can suffice an immortal soul. Look, as God never rested till he had made man, so man can never rest till he comes to enjoy God; the soul of man is of a very vast capacity, and nothing can fill it to the brim but he that is fulness itself. It is the breast, and not the baby[2] nor the rattle, that will satisfy the hungry child; and it is God, and not this or that creature, that can satisfy the soul of man. But,

(14.) *Fourteenthly,* As God is a soul-satisfying portion, so God is *a permanent portion, an indefinite portion, a never failing portion, a lasting, yea, an everlasting portion*: Ps. lxxiii. 26, 'My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength, or the rock, of my heart, and my portion for ever.' God is a fountain which the hottest summer dries not, a bottomless treasure that can never be expended. God ever was, and ever will be. He cannot borrow his being from anything, who gives being and well-being to all things. 'God is Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, he is yesterday and to-day, and the same for ever,' Rev. i. 8. God is the Almighty, which is, and which was, and which is to come. All the differences of time are united by some to connote the eternity of God, in that Exod. iii. 14, 'And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.'[3] Some translate this text, according to the full scope of the future amongst the Hebrews, 'I am that I am, that I was, and that I will be;' for the future amongst the Hebrews points at all differences of time, past, present, and to come; but others, observing the strict and proper signification of the future, translate it thus, 'I will be that I will be.' This name of God imports two of God's incommunicable attributes,

First, His eternity, when he saith, 'I will be.'

Secondly, His immutability, when he saith, 'That I will be.' The Rabbins, upon this text, express themselves after this manner: 'The blessed God said unto Moses, Say unto them, I that have been, and I the same now, and I the same for time to come,' &c.; but others, more agreeable to the Chaldee paraphrase, express themselves thus: 'I, he that is, and was, and hereafter will be, hath sent me unto you.'[4] But it is observable, that the angel of the waters unites all differences of time in that great and glorious acknowledgment, Rev. xvi. 5, 'Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.' God is a God of that infinite excellency and glory, that

[1] A reminiscence of Augustine's memorable saying, 'Fecisti nos ad te, Domine, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te,' Conf. i. 1.—G. [2] 'Doll.'—G.

[3] *Omnia tempora conjuncta de Deo dicta eternitatem connotant.*

[4] Vide Ainsworth and D. Rivetus on the place. The Hebrew words in this Exod. iii. and their several significations do well agree with the name Jehovah, which implieth, that God here sending Moses, is eternal in his being, faithful in his promises, and almighty in the performance thereof.

it is utterly impossible for him to be better, or other than he is. If God should in the least be alterable or mutable, he would presently cease to be God. God is a God of that transcendent excellency, that there can be nothing added to him, nor nothing subtracted from him. If you add anything to him, you deny him to be God; and if you take anything from him, you destroy his being, James i. 17; Ps. xc. 2, 'From everlasting to everlasting thou art God.' 'And Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall never be taken from her,' Luke x. 42. God is eternal, as neither being capable of a beginning nor ending; and therefore the Egyptians used to signify God by a circle, and the Persians thought that they honoured God most, when, going up to the top of the highest tower, they called him the circle of heaven. Now you know a circle hath no end. And it was a custom among the Turks to go up every morning to a high tower, and to cry out, God always was, and always will be, and so salute their Mahomet. Some things have a beginning, but no ending, as angels and the souls of men; and some things have no beginning, and yet have an end, as the decrees of God in their final accomplishment; and some things have both a beginning and an ending, as all sublunary things; but God hath neither beginning nor ending. All creatures have a lasting, angels have an outlasting, but God hath an everlasting being: 1 Tim. i. 17, 'Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.' God is without beginning and end, first and last, past and to come: Ps. cii. 25-27, 'Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment: as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.' Were there no other scripture to prove the eternity and immutability of God, this were enough.[1] Whatever changes may pass upon the heavens and the earth, yet God will always remain unchangeable and unalterable. By what hath been said, it is most evident that God is an everlasting portion, that he is a never-failing portion.

But now all earthly portions are very uncertain; now they are, and anon they are not: Prov. xxiii. 5, 'Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle towards heaven.' Though the foolish world call riches substance, yet they have no solid subsistence. All earthly portions are as transitory as a shadow, a ship, a bubble, a bird, a dream, an arrow, a post that passeth swiftly away. Riches were never true to any that have trusted in them. In this text, riches are said not to be, because they do not continue to be; they will not abide by a man, they will not long continue with a man, and therefore they are as if they were not.[2] All earthly things are vain and transitory, they are rather shows and shadows than real things themselves: 1 Cor. vii. 31, 'For the fashion of this world passeth away.' The Greek word σχῆμα signifies a mathematical figure, which is a mere notion, and nothing in substance. All

[1] He that made heaven and earth must needs be before them, and therefore eternal; but this God did, *ergo*.

[2] Crassus was so rich that he maintained an army with his own revenues; yet he, his great army, with his son and heir, fell together, and so his great estate fell to others. [See index under Crassus for other references to this.—G.]

the glory of this world is rather a matter of fashion than of substance, it is a body without a soul, it is a golden shell without a kernel, it is a show without a substance. There is no firmness, there is no solidness, there is no consistency, there is no constancy in any of the creatures. All the pomp, and state, and glory of the world is but a mere piece of pageantry, a mask, a comedy, a fantasy: Acts xxv. 23, 'And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp.' The original words, μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας, signifies *great fantasy*, or *vain show*. The greatest glory and pomp of this world, in the eye of God, in the account of God, is but as a fantasy or a shadow. It was a custom in Rome, that when the emperor went by upon some great day in all his imperial pomp, there was an officer appointed to burn flax before him, and to cry out, *Sic transit gloria mundi*, so the glory of this world passeth away;[1] and this was purposely done to put him in mind that all his honour, pomp, glory, and grandeur should soon pass and vanish away, as the flax did that he saw burnt before his eyes. That great conqueror of the world, Alexander, caused a sword in the compass of a wheel to be painted upon a table, to shew that what he had gotten by the sword was subject to be turned about by the wheel of fortune;[2] and many great conquerors, besides him, have found it so, and many now alive have seen it so.

Look, as the rainbow shews itself in all its dainty colours, and then vanisheth away; so doth all worldly honours, riches, and preferments shew themselves and then vanish away; and how many in our days have found it so! When one was a-commending the riches and wealth of merchants; I do not love that wealth, said an heathen, which hangs upon ropes, for if they break, the ship and all her wealth miscarries. Certainly within these few months the miscarrying of several ships hath caused several merchants sadly to miscarry. A storm at sea, a spark of fire, an unfaithful servant, a false oath, or a treacherous friend, may quickly bring a man to sit with Job upon a dunghill. Look, as the bird flies from tree to tree, and as the beggar goes from door to door, and as the pilgrim travels from place to place, and as the physician walks from patient to patient; so all the riches, honours, and glory of this world do either fly from man to man, or else walk from man to man. Who knows not, that many times one is made honourable by another's disgrace? another is made full by another man's emptiness? and a third is made rich by another's poverty? How soon is the courtier's glory eclipsed, if the prince doth but frown upon him! and how soon doth the prince become a peasant, if God doth but frown upon him? Now one is exalted, and anon he is debased; now one is full, and anon he is hungry; now one is clothed gloriously, and anon he is clothed with rags; now one is at liberty, and anon he is under restraint; now a man hath many friends, and anon he hath never a friend. There is nothing but vanity and uncertainty in all earthly portions. But,

(15.) *Fifteenthly*, and lastly, As God is a permanent and never failing portion, so God is *an incomparable portion;* and this follows clearly and roundly upon what hath been said; for,

[1] Cf. Sibbes's Works, vol. iv. Notes *d* p. 58, and *k* p. 305, vol. vii. pp. 603, 604.—G.
[2] Plutarch in the life of Alexander, &c.

(1.) If God be a present portion, a portion in hand, a portion in possession; and,

(2.) If God be an immense portion, if he be the vastest, the largest, and the greatest portion; and,

(3.) If God be an all-sufficient portion; and,

(4.) If God be the most absolute, needful, and necessary portion; and

(5.) If God be a pure and unmixed portion; and,

(6.) If God be a glorious, a happy, and a blessed portion; and,

(7.) If God be a peculiar portion; and,

(8.) If God be a universal portion; and,

(9.) If God be a safe portion, a secure portion, a portion that none can rob or wrong us of; and,

(10.) If God be a suitable portion; and,

(11.) If God be an incomprehensible portion; and,

(12.) If God be an inexhaustible portion, a portion that can never be spent, that can never be exhausted or drawn dry; and,

(13.) If God be a soul-satisfying portion; and,

(14.) If God be a permanent and an everlasting portion: then it must very necessarily follow, that God is an incomparable portion. But such a portion God is, as I have proved at large; and, therefore, beyond all dispute, God must needs be an incomparable portion: Prov. iii. 13–15, 'Happy is the man that findeth wisdom,' (that is, the Lord Jesus Christ), 'and the man that getteth understanding: for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared to her.' All the gold of Ophir, and all the silver of the Indies, which are but the guts and garbage[1] of the earth, are nothing, yea, less than nothing, compared with God. God is a portion more precious than all those things which are esteemed most precious. A man may desire, what not? he may desire that all the mountains in the world may be turned into mountains of gold for his use; he may desire that all the rocks in the world may be turned into the richest pearls for his use; he may desire that all the treasure that is buried in the sea may be brought into his treasuries; he may desire that all the crowns and sceptres of all the princes and emperors of the world, may be piled up at his gate, as they were once said to be at Alexander's; yet all these things are not comparable to a saint's portion, yea, they are not to be named in that day, wherein the excellency of a saint's portion is set forth. Horace writes of a precious stone that was more worth than twenty thousand shekels, and Pliny valued the two precious pearls of Cleopatra at twelve hundred thousand shekels.[2] But what were these, and what were all other precious stones in the world, but dung and dross, in comparison of a saint's portion? Philip. iii. 7, 9. I have read a story of a man, whom Chrysostom did feign to be in prison. Oh, saith he, if I had but liberty, I would desire no more! He had it. Oh then, if I had but for necessity, I would desire no more! He had it. Oh then, had I for a little variety, I would desire no more! He had it. Oh then, had I any office, were it the meanest, I would desire no more! He had it. Oh then, had I but a magistracy, though over one town only, I would desire no more! He had it. Oh then, were I a prince, I would

[1] Spelled 'garbidge.'—G.

[2] Nat. Hist. lib. ix. c. 58.—G.

desire no more! He had it. Oh then, were I but a king, I would desire no more! He had it. Oh then, were I but an emperor, I would desire no more! He had it. Oh then, were I but emperor of the whole world, I would then desire no more! He had it; and yet then he sits down with Alexander, and weeps that there are no more worlds for him to possess. Now did any man enjoy what he is said to desire, it would be but a very mean portion compared with God. We may truly say of all the honours, riches, greatness, grandeur, and glory of this world, compared with God, as Gideon sometimes said of the vintage of Abiezer, 'The gleanings of Ephraim are better than the vintage of Abiezer,' Judges viii. 2; so the very gleanings, yea, the smallest gatherings of God, are far better, and more excellent and transcendent, they are more satisfying, more delighting, more ravishing, more quieting, and more contenting than all earthly portions are or can be. What comparison is there between a drop of a bucket and the vast ocean? between a weak drop, which recollecting all its force, yet hath not strength enough to fall, and the mighty waters? Or what comparison is there between the dust of the balance and the whole earth? Why, you will say, there is no comparison between these things; and I will say, there is less between all finite portions, and such an infinite portion as God is. For this is most certain, that there must needs be always an infinite distance between what is finite and what is infinite; and such a portion God is. By all that hath been said, it is most evident that God is an incomparable portion.

But now all earthly portions are comparable portions. You may easily and safely compare one earthly portion with another, one prince's revenues may be comparable to another's, and one great man's lordships may be comparable to another's, and one merchant's estate may be comparable to another's, and one gentlemen's lands may be comparable to another's, and one wife's portion may be comparable to another's, and one child's portion may be comparable to another's, &c., but God is an incomparable portion. There is no comparison to be made between God and other portions. And thus I have in these fifteen particulars fully discovered the excellency of the saints' portion above all other portions.

And, therefore, I shall now come to the second thing, and that is, to shew you,

II. *Upon what grounds their title unto God as their portion is founded and bottomed; and they are these that follow:—*

(1.) *First, The free favour and love of God, the good will and pleasure of God,* is the true ground and bottom of God's bestowing of himself as a portion upon his people, Deut. vii. 6–8; Ezek. xvi. 1-15. There was no loveliness nor comeliness in them that should move him to bestow himself upon them. They had neither portion nor proportion, and therefore there was no cause in them why God should bestow himself as a portion upon them. God, for the glory of his own free grace and love, hath bestowed himself as a portion upon those who have deserved to have their portion amongst devils and damned spirits, in those torments that are endless, ceaseless, and remediless. The Ethnics[1] feign, that their gods and goddesses loved some certain trees, for some lovely good

[1] That is, the heathens, applied to all nations, non-Jewish and non-Christian.—G.

that was in them; for Jupiter loved the oak for durance, and Neptune the cedar for stature, and Apollo the laurel for greenness, and Venus the poplar for whiteness, and Pallas the vine for fruitfulness; but what should move the God of gods to love us, who were so unworthy, so filthy, so empty, so beggarly, that were trees indeed, but such as Jude mentions, 'corrupt, fruitless, twice dead, and plucked up by the roots'? ver. 12. The question may be resolved in three words, *Amat quia amat*, he loves us because he loves us. The root of all divine love to us lieth only in the bosom of God. But,

(2.) *Secondly*, Their title to God as their portion is founded upon *God's free and voluntary donation of himself to them in the covenant of grace*, Ezek. xi. 19; Heb. viii. 10–13. In the covenant of grace, God hath freely bestowed himself upon his people: Jer. xxxii. 38, 40, 'And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' The covenant of grace is the great charter, it is the *Magna Charta* of all a saint's spiritual privileges and immunities. Now in this great charter, the Lord hath proclaimed himself to be his people's God: Jer. x. 16, 'The portion of Jacob is the former of all things; the Lord of hosts is his name.' He that is the former of all things, even the Lord of hosts, is the portion of Jacob; and he is Jacob's portion, by virtue of that covenant of grace, which is a free, a full, a rich, and an everlasting covenant: a covenant that he will never break, nor alter, nor falsify; a covenant that he hath sworn to make good, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together.[1] That covenant of grace, whereby God gives himself to be his people's God and portion, he is bound to make good by his oath; and, therefore, certainly whoever is forsworn, God will never be forsworn. The Egyptians, though heathens, so hated perjury, that if any man did but swear 'By the life of the king,' and did not perform his oath, that man was to die, and no gold was to redeem his life, as Paulus Fagius observeth in his comment on Genesis.[2] To think that God will not make good that covenant that he hath bound himself by oath to make good, is blasphemy, yea, it is to debase him below the very heathens. All laws, both divine and human, have left no such bond of assurance to tie and fasten one to another, as that of an oath or covenant; which, as they are to be taken in sincerity, so they are to be kept inviolably. Certainly, the covenant and oath of the great God, is not like a gipsy's knot, that is fast or loose at pleasure. Whoever breaks with him, yet he will be sure, faithfully and inviolably to keep his covenant and his oath with his. But,

(3.) *Thirdly*, Their title to God as their God and portion, is founded and bottomed upon *that marriage union that is between God and his people*, Jer. iii. 13, 14. Hosea ii. 19, 20, 23, 'And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies: I will betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord. And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them that are not my

[1] Ps lxxxix. 34, 35; Isaiah liv. 9, 10; Ps. cxi. 5; Ps. cv. 9; Mic. vii. 20; Heb. vi. 13–19; Luke i. 73.

[2] Inserted in the *Critici Sacri*.—G.

people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.' This threefold repetition, 'I will betroth thee,' 'I will betroth thee,' 'I will betroth thee,' notes three things,

[1.] First, *the certainty of their marriage union and communion with God.*

[2.] Secondly, *The excellency and dignity of their marriage union and communion with God. And,*

[3.] Thirdly, *The difficulty of believing their marriage union and communion with God.* There is nothing that Satan doth so much envy and oppose, as he doth the soul's marriage union and communion with God; and therefore God fetches it over again and again and again, 'I will betroth thee unto me,' &c. And so in that Isaiah lxi. 10, 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.' And so, chap. lxii. 5, 'For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as a bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.'[1] I have read of five sisters, of the same birth, pedigree. and race, whereof one was married to a knight, another to an earl, a third to a gentleman, a fourth to a mean man, and the fifth to a filthy beggar. Though they were all alike by birth and descent, yet their difference did lie in their marriage. We are all alike by creation, by the fall, by nature, and by the first birth; it is only our marriage union and communion with God that differences us from others, and that exalts and lifts us up above others. Look, as the husband is the wife's by marriage union and communion, so God is the believer's God and portion, by virtue of that marriage union and communion that is between God and the believer. And let thus much suffice for the second thing.

III. I shall come now to the third thing, and that is, *to make some improvement of this blessed and glorious truth to ourselves;* and, therefore,

Is it so, that God is the saint's portion, and that he is such an excellent, and such a transcendent portion above all other portions, as hath been fully evidenced? Then,

[1.] *First,* Let not the saints that have God for their portion *fret and vex themselves, because of those earthly portions that God commonly bestows upon the worst of men.* There is a great aptness in the best of men to envy those earthly portions that God often bestows upon the worst of men. The lights of the sanctuary have burnt dim, stars of no small magnitude have twinkled, men of eminent parts, famous in their generations for religion and piety, have staggered in their judgments, to see the flourishing estate of the wicked.[2] It made Job to complain, Job xxi. 7–16, and chap. xxiv. 12, and Jeremiah to expostulate with God,

[1] What was said by one of the Rabbins concerning Methuselah's wife, that she had nine husbands in one, is very applicable to the believer that hath God for his husband.

[2] Diogenes, the Cynic philosopher, seeing Harpalus, a vicious person, still thriving in the world, he was bold to say, that wicked Harpalus his living long in prosperity, was an argument that God had cast off his care of the world, that he cared not which end went forward; and no wonder if this heathen stumbled at the prosperity of the wicked, when so many of the precious sons of Zion have stumbled at that stumbling-stone. [Harpalus: Pausania, i. 37; Athen. xiii.; Diod. xvii. 108.—G.]

chap. xii. 1, 2, and David even to faint and sink, Ps. lxxiii. To see the prosperity of the ungodly, to see the wicked in wealth and the saints in want, the wicked in their robes and the saints in their rags, the wicked honoured and the saints despised, the wicked exalted and the saints debased, the wicked upon thrones and saints upon dunghills, is a sight that hath sadly put the best of men sometimes to it. But this is a temper of spirit that doth noways become those that have God for their portion; and therefore the psalmist, in the 37th Psalm, cautions the saints against it no less than three several times, as you may see in verses 1, 7, 8. There is nothing that doth so ill become a saint that hath God for his portion, as to be sick of the *frets*; and to prevent this mischief, this sickness, the precept is doubled, and redoubled, 'fret not, fret not, fret not.' Though they that have sore eyes are offended at bright clear lights, yet they that have God for their portion should never fret or fume, storm or rage, because some are greater than they, or richer than they, or higher than they, or more honourable than they, because all their prosperity is nothing but an unhappy happiness; it is nothing but a banquet, like Haman's, before execution; and what man is there, that is in his wits, that would envy a malefactor who meets with honourable entertainment as he is going along to execution? All a wicked man's delicate meats, his fine bits, and his murdering morsels, are sauced, and all his pleasant and delightful drinks are spiced, with the wrath and displeasure of an angry God; and why then should you fret and vex at their prosperity? What madness and folly would it be in a man that is heir to many thousands per annum, to envy a stage player that is clothed in the habit of a king, but yet not heir to one foot of land, no, nor worth one penny in all the world, and who at night must put off his royal apparel, and the next day put on his beggarly habit? Oh, sirs! it will be but a little little while before the great God will disrobe the wicked of all their prosperity, felicity, and worldly glory, and clothe them with the rags of shame, scorn, and contempt for ever; and therefore, oh what folly and madness would it be for those that are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ of all the glory of heaven, to envy the prosperity of the wicked, Rom. viii. 17.

The prosperity of the wicked lays them open to the worst and greatest sins.

[1.] First, *It lays them open to all uncleanness and filthiness*, Jer. v. 7, 8.

[2.] Secondly, *It lays them open to pride and contempt of God*, Ps. lxxiii. 3–13, Deut. xxxii. 15.

[3.] Thirdly, *It lays them open to vex, oppress, tyrannize, persecute, insult, and triumph over the poor people of God*, as you may see in Pharaoh, Saul, Ahab, Jezebel, Haman, and the scribes and pharisees.

[4.] Fourthly, *It lays them open to a neglect and slighting of the ways of God, and of the ordinances of God*, Job xxi. 5–16; Mal. iii. 13–15; Jer. xxii. 21. When the protestants in France were in their prosperity, they slighted powerful preachings, &c., and began to affect a vain frothy way of preaching and living, which ushered in the massacre upon them. Moulin[1] hit it, when, speaking of the French protestants, he said, when the papists hurt us and persecute us for reading the scriptures, we burn with

[1] Peter du Moulin, D.D.—G.

zeal to be reading of them; but now persecution is over, our Bibles are like old almanacs.

[5.] Fifthly, *It lays them open to a stupidness, unmindfulness, and forgetfulness of the afflictions of the people of God*, Amos vi. 1–8. Pharaoh's chief butler was no sooner set down in the seat of prosperity, but quite contrary to his promise, he easily forgets Joseph in misery.

[6.] Sixthly, *It layeth them open to dreadful apostasy from the ways and worship of God*, Deut. xxxii. 15–18. No sooner was Israel possessed of the good land that flowed with milk and honey, &c., but they forsook the true worship of God, and fell to the worshipping of idols, for which at last the good land spewed them out as a generation cursed and abhorred by God.

[7.] Seventhly, *It lays them open to all carnal security*, as you may see in the old world: their prosperity cast them into a bed of security, and their security ushered in a flood of sin, and that flood of sin ushered in a flood of wrath, Mat. xxiv. 37–39.

[8.] Eighthly, *It lays them open to idolatry, which is a God-provoking and a land-destroying sin*, Hosea ii. 6-8, and chap. iv. 6, 7, &c. Ah, sirs! who can seriously consider of the dreadful sins that the prosperity of the wicked lays them open to, and yet fret and vex at their prosperity?

Again, as their prosperity lays them open to the greatest sins, so their prosperity lays them open to *the greatest temptations*. Witness their tempting of themselves, and their own lusts, and witness their temptings of others to the worst of wickedness and villanies, and witness their frequent tempting and provoking of the great God to his own face, and witness their daily, yea, their hourly tempting of Satan to tempt their own souls. O sirs! as there is no condition that lays persons open to such great transgressions as prosperity doth, so there is no condition that lays persons open to such horrid temptations as prosperity doth; and why then should God's holy ones envy wicked men's prosperity, and worldly glory, &c.

Again, *Their prosperity, and worldly felicity and glory, is all the portion, and all the heaven and happiness that ever they are like to have:* Ps. xvii. 14, 'From men of the world, which have their portion in this life.' Certainly, men whose hearts are worldly, whose minds are worldly, whose spirits are worldly, whose desires are worldly, whose hopes are worldly, and whose main ends are worldly, have only the world for their portion; and what a pitiful perishing portion is that! Men that choose the world as their portion, and that delight in the world as their portion, and that trust to the world as their portion, and that in straits run to the world as their portion, and that take content and satisfaction in the world as their portion; doubtless these have never known what it is to have God for their portion. That is a very heart-cutting and soul-killing word that you have in that Mat. vi. 2, 'Verily I say unto you, that they have their reward.' The scribes and pharisees proposed to themselves, the eyes of men, the praise of men, and the applause of men, for a reward of their alms, &c., and Christ tells them, that they have their reward; not God's reward, but theirs; that is, that reward that they had propounded to themselves, as the prime and ultimate end of their actions; and doubtless that word was a thunderbolt to Dives, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime received thy good things, and like-

wise Lazarus his evil,' &c., Luke xvi. 25. Wicked men have their best here, their worst is to come; they have their comforts here, their torments are to come; they have their joys here, their sorrows are to come; they have their heaven here, their hell is to come. Gregory being advanced to great preferment, professed that there was no scripture that struck so much terror and trembling into his heart, as that scripture did, 'Here you have your reward.' Had wicked men but their eyes in their heads, and a little understanding in their hearts, and life in their consciences, they would quickly conclude that it is hell on this side hell, for a man to have his portion in this world; and why then should you envy the prosperity of the wicked?

Again, *All their prosperity is cursed unto them;* as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together.[1] All their comforts are cursed without doors, and all their comforts are cursed within doors; there are snares on all their tables, and poison in all their cups, and the plague in all their brave clothes, &c. Dionysius the tyrant, to shew Damocles, one of his flatterers, the felicity, or rather the infelicity, of a king, attired him as a king, and set him at the table, served as a king; and whilst he was in his imperial robes, he caused a naked sword, with the point downward, to be hung just over his head by a horse hair. which made Damocles to tremble, and to forbear both meat and mirth.[2] Though the feast was a royal feast, and the attendance royal attendance, and the music royal music, yet Damocles, for his life, could not taste of any of those varieties that were before him, nor take any comfort or contentment in any other part of his royal entertainment, because of the sword, the sword, that hung but by a single hair over his head. O sirs! a sword, a sharp sword, a two-edged sword, a sword of displeasure, a sword of wrath, a sword of vengeance, hangs over the head of every wicked person when he is in his most prosperous and flourishing condition; and had sinners but eyes to see this sword, it would be as the handwriting upon the wall; it would cause their thoughts to be troubled, and their countenances to be changed, and their joints to be loosed, and their knees to be dashed one against another; and why, then, should Christians fret and vex at the prosperity of the wicked?

Again, *When wicked men are at the highest, then are they nearest their fall;* as you may see in that 37th Psalm, and that 73d Psalm, and in those great instances of Pharaoh, Adoni-bezek, Benhadad, Ahab, Sennacherib, Haman, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Herod, &c.[3] Look, as the ship is soonest cast away when she is top and top-gallant, so when wicked men are top and top-gallant, when they are at the height of all their pomp, bravery, and worldly glory, then God usually tumbles them down into the very gulf of misery. The great ones of the world have suddenly fallen from their highest honours and dignities, and have been sorely and sadly exercised with the greatest scorns and calamities. Let me give you this in a few remarkable instances.

Valerian, the Roman emperor, fell from being an emperor to be a footstool to Sapor, the king of Persia, as often as he took horse.[4]

[1] Deut. xxviii. 15–68; Lev. xxvi. 14–39; Prov. iii. 33; Mal. ii. 2.

[2] Vide *Cicero Tusc. Quæst.* [Cf. Index under Damocles for former references.—G.]

[3] Exod. xiv.; Judges i. 6, 7; 1 Kings xx. and xxii.; 2 Kings xix.; Esther vi. 4; Dan. v.

[4] Amm. Marcel. xxiii. 5; Trehell. Polh. Frag. Vit. Valerian; Aurel. Vict. de Coes. xxxii. *Epit.* xxxii.; Eutrop. ix. 6.—G.

Valens the emperor, a furious Arian, being wounded in a fight with the Goths, in his flight he betook himself to a poor cottage, wherein he was burnt by the Goths.[1]

Aurelianus, the Roman emperor, brought Tetricus[2] his opposite, and the noble queen Zenobia of Palmerina,[3] in triumph to Rome in golden chains.

Bajazet, a proud emperor of the Turks, being taken prisoner by Tamberlain,[4] a Tartarian emperor, he bound him in chains of gold, and used him for a footstool when he took horse; and when he ate meat, he made him gather crumbs under his table and eat them for his food.

Cæsar, having bathed his sword in the blood of the senate and his own countrymen, is, after a while, miserably murdered in the senate by his own friends, Cassius and Brutus, to shew that they are but the scourges and rods of the Almighty, which he will cast into the fire as soon as he hath done with them.

The victorious emperor, Henry the Fourth, who in sixty-two pitched battles for the most part became victorious, fell to that poverty and misery before he died, that he was forced to petition to be a prebend in the church of Spire to maintain him in his old age, which the bishop of that place denied him; whereupon he brake forth into that speech of Job, 'Have pity upon me, O my friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me,' Job xix. 21. He died of grief and want.

And Procopius reports of king Guidimer, who was sometimes a potent king of the Vandals, that he was brought so low as to entreat his friend to send him a sponge, a loaf of bread, and an harp: a sponge to dry up his tears, a loaf of bread to maintain his life, and an harp to solace himself in his misery.

Dionysius, king of Sicily, was such a cruel tyrant that his people banished him. After his banishment he went to Corinth, where he lived a base and contemptible life. At last he became a schoolmaster, that so, when he could no longer tyrannize over men, he might over boys.

Great Pompey, that used to boast that he could raise all Italy in arms with a stamp of his foot, had not so much as room to be buried in.

And William the Conqueror's corpse lay three days unburied, his interment being hindered by one that claimed the ground to be his.

And Pythias pined to death for want of bread, who once was able to entertain and maintain Xerxes's mighty army.[5]

And Philip de Comines reports of a Duke of Exeter, who though he had married Edward the Fourth's sister, yet he saw him in the low countries begging barefoot.[6]

And so Belisarius, a most famous general, and the only man living in his time for glorious victories, riches, and renown, yet in his old age he had his eyes put out by the empress Theodora; and being led at last in a string, he was forced to cry out, *Date panem Belisario*, &c., Give

[1] Tacitus Hist. i. 7, 52, 57, 61, 66, *et alibi*; Plutarch, Otho, c. 6.—G.

[2] See Dissertation by De Boze in Memoires de l'Academie de Sciences et Belles Lettres, Vol. xxvi. p. 504.—G.

[3] Palmyra. See Trehell. Polis, *Trig. Tyrann.*; Zonar xii. 27.—G. [4] Tamerlane.—G.

[5] Turk. Hist. fol. 220, &c. [Knolles.—G.]

[6] In the celebrated 'Memoirs,' *sub* Exeter.—G.

a crust to old blind Belisarius, whom virtue advanced, but envy hath brought into this great misery. By all these royal instances, you see the truth of that which once a royal slave hinted to Sesostris. The story runs thus:—

Sesostris having taken many of his neighbour kings prisoners, he made them to draw his chariot by turns. Now, it so happened that one of these royal slaves, as he was drawing in the chariot, had his eye almost continually fixed on the wheels, which Sesostris observing, asked him why he looked so seriously upon the wheels. He answered, that the falling of that spoke lowest which was even now highest, put him in mind of the instability of fortune. Sesostris, duly weighing the parable, would never after be drawn by his royal slaves any more.

By what hath been said, it is more evident that when wicked men are highest they are nearest their fall; and that none fall so certainly and so suddenly, and under such dreadful calamities and miseries, as those that have been the most highly advanced in all worldly dignities and glories. And why, then, should any fret or vex at their outward prosperity or worldly felicity?

Again, *God will bring them to an account for all those talents of power, of honour, of riches, of trust, of time, of interest that God hath given them in the world;* and the more they have employed the liberality and bounty of God against God or his glory, or interest, or people, the shorter shall be their felicity, and the more endless shall be their misery, Mat. xxv. 14–31. The greatest account and the greatest damnation commonly attends the great ones of the world. I have read of Philip the Third of Spain, whose life was free from gross evils, professing that he would rather lose all his kingdoms than offend God willingly; yet being in the agony of death, and considering more thoroughly of that account he was to give to God, fear struck him, and these words brake from him, 'Oh, would to God I had never reigned! Oh that those years I have spent in my kingdom, I had lived a private life in the wilderness! Oh that I had lived a solitary life with God, how much more confidently should I have gone to the throne of God! What doth all my glory profit me now, but that I have so much the more torment in my death, and the greater account to give up to God!' I have read of a soldier, who, being to die for taking a bunch of grapes contrary to his general's command, as he was going along to execution, he went eating of his grapes, whereupon one of his fellow-soldiers rebuked him, saying, What! are you eating your grapes now you are going to execution? The poor fellow replied, Prithee, friend, do not envy me my grapes; for I shall pay a dear price for them, I shall lose my life for them; and so accordingly he did. So I say, Oh you that have God for your portion, do not envy, do not fret and vex, at the prosperity of the wicked; for what though they have more than their heart can wish, what though they live in pleasure and wallow in all carnal and sensual delights, &c., yet they have a sad account to give up to God, and they shall pay dear at last for all their worldly enjoyments. For without sound repentance on their sides, and pardoning grace on God's, they shall not only lose their lives, but they shall also for ever lose their immortal souls; and therefore never fret at their prosperity.

O sirs, do not you remember that Lazarus did not fret nor fume

because Dives had robes for his rags, and delicates for his scraps? &c. for he very well knew that though he was *sine domo*, yet not *sine Domino*. He had a guard of glorious angels to transport his holy, precious, heaven-born soul into Abraham's bosom. He knew that it was better to beg on earth, than to beg in hell. O sirs, what is darkness to light, earth to heaven, chaff to wheat, tin to silver, dross to gold, or pebbles to pearls? No more are all earthly portions to that God who is the saints' portion; and, therefore, let not the saints, that have such a matchless portion, envy the prosperity and felicity of wicked men. It is the justice of envy to kill and torment the envious; and, therefore, shun it as you would posion in your meat, or a serpent in the way. A man were better have a serpent tumbling up and down in his bowels, than to have envy a-gnawing in his soul. Envy is as pernicious a wickedness, as it is a foolish and a groundless wickedness. Envy is a scourge to scourge the soul; it is a serpent to sting the soul; it is a poison to swell the soul; it is a saw to saw the soul; it is a moth that corrupts the soul, and it is a canker that eats up the soul; and therefore fly from it, as you would fly from the most cruel and destroying adversary. O sirs, to be angry, because God is bountiful to others; to frown, because God smiles upon others; to be bitter, because God is sweet in his dealings with others; and to sigh, because God multiplies favours and blessings upon others; what is this but to turn others' good into our own hurt, others' glory and mercy into our own punishment and torment? And if this be not to create a hell in our own hearts, I am much mistaken. I shall conclude this first inference with the counsel of the prophet in that Ps. xlix. 16, 17, 'Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him.' When the bodies of the wicked are rotting in their graves, and their souls are roaring in hell, none of their worldly greatness, pomp, state, glory, gallantry, riches, rents, or revenues, shall descend after them to administer one drop of comfort to them; and therefore never envy their outward prosperity or worldly glory, &c. But,

(2) *Secondly*, If the saints have such an excellent, such a transcendent, and such a matchless portion, oh then, let them *be content with their present condition, let them sit down satisfied and contented, though they have but a handful of meal in their barrel, and a little oil in a cruse*, 1 Kings xvii. 12. O sirs, in having of God you have much, in having of God you have enough, in having of God you have all; and why then should you not sit down quiet with your present allowance? Certainly, if much will not satisfy you, if enough will not satisfy you, if all will not satisfy you, nothing will satisfy you: Heb. xiii. 5, 'Let your conversation be without covetousness (or love of silver, as the Greek word signifies); and be content with such things as you have (or as the Greek hath it, ἀρκούμενοι τοῖς παροῦσιν, be content with present things): for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' There are five negatives in the Greek, 'I will not, not, not, not, not leave thee nor forsake thee;' fully to assure and fully to satisfy the people of God that he will never forsake them, and that he will everlastingly stick close to them. What doth this unparalleled gemination, 'I will never, never, never, never, never,' import but this, 'I will ever,

ever, ever, yea and for ever and ever take care of thee, and look after thee, and be mindful of thee.' Though they had changed their glory for contempt, Heb. xi. 36–38, their fine raiment for sheep-skins and goat-skins, their silver for brass, their plenty for scarcity, their fulness for emptiness, their stately houses for holes and caves, and dens of the earth, yet they are to be contented and satisfied with present things, upon this very ground, that God will always cleave to them, and that he will never turn his back upon them. The Hebrews had been stripped and plundered of all their goods that were good for any thing, and yet they must be contented, they must sit down satisfied, with their hands upon their mouths, though all were gone, Heb. x. 34. Though men cannot bring their means to their minds, yet they must bring their minds to their means, and then they will sit down in silence, though they have but a rag on their backs, a penny in their purse, and a crust in their cupboards, &c. O sirs! a little will serve nature, less will serve grace, though nothing will serve men's lusts; and why then should not Christians be contented with a little?[1] O friends! you have but a short journey to go, you have but a little way home, and a little will serve to bear your charges till you come to heaven, and therefore be contented with a little. To have more than will serve to bring a man to his journey's end is but a burden. One staff is helpful to a man in his journey, but a bundle is hurtful; and this, doubtless, Jacob well understood when he made that proposal in Gen. xxviii. 20, 21, 'If God will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, then shall the Lord be my God.' Jacob doth not say, If God will give me delicates and junkets to eat, he shall be my God! Oh no! But if he will give me but bread to eat, though it be never so coarse, and never so black, and never so dry, he shall be my God. He doth not say, If God will give me so many hundreds, or so many thousands a year, he shall be my God! Oh no! But if he will give me bread to eat, he shall be my God. Nor he doth not say, If God will give me so many hundred pounds in my purse, a comfortable habitation, and a thriving trade, he shall be my God! Oh no! But if he will give me bread to eat, he shall be my God. Nor he doth not say, If God will give me costly apparel, or rich and royal raiment to put on, he shall be my God! Oh no! But if God will give me raiment to put on, though it be never so mean and poor, he shall be my God. If Jacob may but have a little bread to feed him, and a few clothes to cover him, it is as much as he looks for. Look, as a wicked man in the fulness of his sufficiency is in straits, as Job speaks, Job xx. 22, so a holy man, in the fulness of his straits, enjoys an all-sufficiency in God, as you may see in Jacob. O Christians! though you have but little, yet you have the highest and the noblest title that can be to that little that you do enjoy; for you hold all *in capite*, as the apostle sheweth in that large charter of a Christian, 1 Cor. iii. 21–23, which the wicked do not. Now, a hundred a year upon a good title is a better estate than a thousand a year upon a cracked, crazy title. Saints have the best title under heaven for all they enjoy, be it little or be it much. But all the titles that sinners have to their earthly enjoyments are but crazy titles, yea, in comparison of the saints' titles, they are no titles.

[1] Nature is content with a little, as not to starve, not to thirst, saith Galen.

Again, That little that a saint hath, he hath it from *the special love and favour of God; he hath it from a reconciled God,* Prov. xv. 17. Now, a little from special love is better than a great deal from a general providence. A penny from a reconciled God is better than a pound from a bountiful God; a shilling from God as a father is a better estate than an hundred from God as a creator. The kiss that a king gave to one in the story, was a greater gift than the golden cup that he gave to another; a little, with the kisses of God's mouth, is better than all the gold of Ophir, Cant. i. 2. A drop of mercy from special love is better than a sea of mercy from common bounty. Look, as one draught of clear, sweet spring water is more pleasing, satisfying, and delightful to the palate than a sea of brackish salt water, so one draught out of the fountain of special grace is more pleasing, satisfying, and delightful to a gracious soul than a whole sea of mercy from a spring of common grace: and therefore do not wonder when you see a Christian sit down contented with a little.

Again, That little that a Christian hath *shall be certainly blessed and sanctified to him,* 1 Tim. iv. 3–5; Titus i. 15; Jer. xxxii. 41, &c. Though thy mercies, O Christian, are never so few, and never so mean, yet they shall assuredly be blessed unto thee. The Lord hath not only promised that he will bless thy blessings to thee, but he hath also sworn by himself that in blessing he will bless thee; and how darest thou then, O Christian, to think that the great and faithful God will be guilty of a lie, or that which is worse, of perjury? Gen. xxii. 16, 17. Now, a little blessed is better than a great deal cursed; a little blessed is better than a world enjoyed; a pound blessed is better than a thousand cursed; a black crust blessed is better than a feast cursed; the gleanings blessed are better than the whole harvest cursed; a drop of mercy blessed is better than a sea of mercy cursed; Lazarus's crumbs blessed was better than Dives his delicates cursed; Jacob's little blessed unto him was better than Esau's great estate that was cursed unto him. It is always better to have scraps with a blessing than to have manna and quails with a curse; a thin table with a blessing is always better than a full table with a snare, Ps. lxxviii. 18, 32; a thread-bare coat with a blessing is better than a purple robe cursed; a hole, a cave, a den, a barn, a chimney-corner, with a blessing, is better than stately palaces with a curse; a woollen cap blessed is better than a golden crown cursed; and it may be that emperor understood as much, that said of his crown, when he looked on it with tears, If you knew the cares that are under this crown, you would never stoop to take it up.[1] And, therefore, why should not a Christian be contented with a little, seeing his little shall be blessed unto him? Isaac tills the ground, and sows his seed, and God blesses him with an hundred fold, Gen. xxvi. 12; and Cain tills the ground, and sows his seed, but the earth is cursed to him, and commanded not to yield to him his strength, Gen. iv. 12. Oh, therefore, never let a Christian murmur because he hath but a little, but rather let him be still a-blessing of that God that hath blessed his little, and that doth bless his little, and that will bless his little to him.

Again, That little estate that a righteous man hath *is most commonly*

[1] Cyrus.—G.

a more lasting, a more abiding, a more permanent, and a more enduring estate than the great and large estates of the wicked are, Prov. xv. 16, and xvi. 8. Ps. xxxvii. 16, 'A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked.' One old piece of gold is worth more than a thousand new counters, and one box of pearls is more worth than many loads of pebbles, and one hundred pounds a year for ever is better than many hundreds in hand. It is very observable the psalmist doth not simply say, *the estate,* but *the rich estate;* the riches not of one, or a few, but of *many* wicked, are not comparable to that little that a righteous man hath. The Hebrew word המון, *Hamon,* that is here rendered *riches,* signifies also a multitude, or an abundance, or store of riches.[1] A little that a righteous man hath is better than the multitude of riches, or the abundance of riches, or the store of riches that many wicked men have; and he gives you the reason of this in the 17th verse: 'For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, but he upholdeth (or under-props) the righteous.' By 'the arms of the wicked,' you are to understand their strength, their valour, their power, their wit, their wealth, their abundance, which is all the arms they have to support and bear up themselves in the world with. Now, these arms shall be broken, and when they are broken, then, even then, will God uphold the righteous, that is, God will be a continual overflowing fountain of good to his righteous ones, so that they shall never want, though all the springs of the wicked are dried up round about them.

O Sirs! there are so many moths, and so many dangers, and so many crosses, and so many losses, and so many curses that daily attends the great estates of wicked men, that they are very rarely long-lived. Ah! how many in this great city are there that have built their nests on high, and that have thought that they had laid up riches for many years, and that have said in their hearts, that their lands, and stocks, and trades, and houses, and pompous estates should abide for ever, who are now broken in pieces like a potter's vessel. Ah! how often doth the pride, the oppression, the lying, the cheating, the over-reaching, the swearing, the cursing, the whoring, the covetousness, the drunkenness, and the wantonness of the wicked, cut the throat of all their mercies! These are the wickednesses that as a fire burns up all their outward enjoyments, and that turns their earthly paradise into a real hell. It is the wickedness of the wicked that causeth their prosperity to wither, and that provokes God to turn their plenty into scarcity, their glory into contempt, and their honour into shame. It is very observable, that in the holy Scriptures the prosperous estates of the wicked are frequently compared to things of an abrupt existence,[2] to a shadow which soon passeth away; to chaff, which a puff, a blast of wind easily disperseth and scattereth; to grass, which quickly withereth before the sun; to tops of corn, which in an instant are cut off; to the unripe grape, which on a sudden drops down; yea, to a dream in the night; and what is a dream, but a quick fancy, and a momentary vanity? All the riches that the wicked gain, either by their trades, or by

[1] From this word *Hamon* comes the word *Mammon,* Luke xvi. 9.

[2] Job xiv. 2; xxi. 17, 18; Isa. xxix. 5; 2 Kings xix. 26; Job xxiv. 24; xv. 33; xx. 8.

their friends, or by their great places, or by their high offices, or by their subtle contrivances, or by their sinful compliances; and all the honour they gain in the court, or in the camp, or in the school, is but light and inconstant; it is but like the crackling of thorns under a pot. They are fading vanities, that commonly die before those that enjoy them are laid in the dust.

Oh, therefore, let all Christians be contented with their little, seeing that their little shall outlast the large estates of wicked and ungodly men. A man that hath God for his portion can truly say that which no wicked man in the world can say, viz., 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever,' Ps. xxiii. 6. The psalmist doth not say that goodness and mercy should follow him a day, or a few days, or many days, but that 'goodness and mercy should follow him all the days of his life.' The Hebrew word *radaph*, that is here rendered *to follow*, signifies *to persecute;* saith the psalmist, 'Goodness and mercy shall follow me, as the persecutor follows him he persecutes;' that is, it shall follow me frequently, it shall follow me constantly, it shall follow me swiftly, it shall follow me earnestly, it shall follow me unweariedly. The word signifies a studious, anxious, careful, diligent following; it is a metaphor that is taken from beasts and birds of prey, that follow and fly after their prey with the greatest eagerness, closeness, and unweariedness imaginable. Why thus should mercy and loving-kindness follow David all the days of his life; and if in a temptation, he should prove so weak and so foolish as to run from goodness and mercy, yet goodness and mercy should follow him, like as the sun going down followeth the passenger that goeth eastward with his warm beams.

O, but now the mercies of the wicked are short-lived. Though the wicked flourish and spread themselves like a green bay tree one day, yet they are cut down the next, and there is neither root nor branch to be found, tale nor tidings to be heard of them; for in a moment, they, with all their greatness, state, pomp, and glory, are utterly vanished and banished out of the world, Ps. xxxvii. 35–37. And so, Ps. xxxiv. 10, 'The young lions do lack and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.' Young lions are lusty, strong, fierce, and active to seek their prey, and have it they will if it be to be had: and yet for all that they shall lack and suffer hunger. By *young lions*, the learned understand,

[1.] *First*, All wicked rulers; men that are in the highest places and authority, as the lion is the king of beasts, Prov. xxviii. 15, Ezek. xxxii. 2.

[2.] *Secondly*, By lions they understand all cruel oppressors, that are still oppressing and grinding of the faces of the poor: Prov. xxx. 30; 'rich cormorants,' as the Septuagint renders it, 'who live on the spoil of the poor, and are never satisfied.'

[3.] *Thirdly*, By lions, they understand the tyrants and the mighty Nimrods of the world, which are sometimes called lions, Jer. ii. 15, 1 Chron. xi. 22, Nahum ii. 13.

[4.] *And lastly*, By lions, they understand all the crafty and subtle politicians of the earth: Ezek. xxxviii. 13, 'The lion lurks very craftily and secretly for his prey.' The sum of all is this, That wicked men

that are in the highest authority, and that great oppressors, cruel tyrants, and crafty politicians shall be impoverished, and brought to penury, beggary, and misery. And this we have often seen verified before our eyes.

O Christian! what though thou hast but a little of this world, yet the God of all mercies, and all the mercies of God, the God of all comforts, and all the comforts of God, are thine; and what wouldst thou have more? In God is fulness, all fulness, infinite fulness; and if this, with a little of the world, will not satisfy thee, I know not what will. If a God for thy portion will not content thee, all the world will never content thee. Shall Diogenes, a heathen, be more content with his tub to shelter him, and with his dish to drink in, than Alexander was with all his conquests?[1] And shall not a Christian sit down contented and satisfied in the enjoyment of God for his portion, though he hath but a tub to shelter him, bread to feed him, and a dish of water to refresh him? I shall conclude this head with a weighty saying of Cato's, *Si quid est quo utar utor, si non scio quis sum; mihi vitio vertunt, quia multis egeo, et ego illis, quia nequeunt egere.* I have neither house, nor plate, nor garments of any price in my hands; what I have I can use; if not, I can want it: some blame me because I want many things, and I blame them because they cannot want.[2] Oh let not nature do more than grace! Oh let not this heathen put Christians to a blush! But,

(3.) *Thirdly*, If God be the saint's portion, *the sinners are much mistaken, that judge the saints to be the most unhappy men in the world.* There are no men under heaven in such a blessed and happy estate as the saints are, Baalam himself being judge, Num. xxiii. 5–11. A man that hath God for his portion, is honourable even in rags, Ps. xvi. 3. He hath some beams, some rays, of the majesty and glory of God stamped upon his soul, and shining upon his face, and glittering in his life; and he that is so blind as not to behold this, is worse than Balaam the witch. Though the blind Jews could see no form, nor comeliness, nor beauty in Christ that they should desire him, Isa. liii. 2; yet the wise men that came from the east could see his divinity sparkling in the midst of the straw; they could see an heavenly majesty and glory upon him when he lay among the beasts, when he lay in a manger, Luke ii. 7. Witness their tedious journey to find him, and witness their worshipping of him, and witness those rich and royal presents that they brought unto him, Mat. ii. 11. So though the blind sots of the world can see no loveliness nor comeliness, no beauty nor glory, in the saints, or upon the saints, that should render them amiable and desirable in their eyes, yet God, and Christ, and angels, and those that are wise in heart and wise to salvation, can see a great deal of divine beauty, majesty, and glory upon all those that have God for their portion. There is no happiness to that of having God for a man's portion: Ps. cxliv. 15, 'Happy is that people that is in such a case' (but give me that word again), 'yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.' He that hath not God for his portion

[1] The immortal 'tub,' belonging to the Metroum or temple of the mother of the gods. Cf. Seneca, Ep. 99. Lucian, Quomodo Conscr. Hist. ii. p. 364. Diog. Laert. vi. 23; Juvenal xiv. 308; also Plutarch, Alexander, c. 14.—G.

[2] Aulus Gellius. [Cato, *sub Indice.*—G.]

can never be happy, and he that enjoys God for his portion can never be miserable. Augustine, speaking of one who, passing by a stately house which had fair lands about it, and asking another whom he met to whom that house and lands belonged, he answered, to such an one. Oh, says he, that is a happy man indeed. No, says the other, not so happy as you think; for it is no such happiness to have that house and land, but he is happy indeed that hath the Lord for his God, for that is a privilege that exceeds all things whatsoever. For, saith he, he that hath honour and riches may go to hell for all them, but he that hath God to be his God, is sure to be everlastingly happy. According as a man's portion is, so is he. Now, if God be a man's portion, who is the spring, the fountain, the top of all excellency and glory, then certainly that man must needs be an excellent man that hath God for his portion; and upon this score it is that the righteous man is more excellent than his neighbour.[1] Let the righteous man's neighbour be never so great, and never so rich, and never so mighty, and never so noble, yet if he hath not God for his portion, the righteous man is more excellent than he. And the reason is evident, because he hath that God for his portion that is most eminent and excellent. O sirs! if God be most excellent, if God be alone excellent, then they must needs be most excellent that have God for their portion. It is very observable that, according to the excellency of God, the excellency of the saints is in some proportion hinted at in Scripture; as in that Deut. xxxiii. 26, 29, 'There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun;' and presently it follows, 'Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee?' or, Oh the happinesses of thee, O Israel! Oh the multiplied happiness, the heaped-up happiness, that attends Israel! The saints that have God for their portion are the world's paragons; they are worthies 'of whom this world is not worthy;' they are such great, such noble, such worthy worthies, that this world is not worthy to think on them, to look on them, to wait on them, or to enjoy their company. One saint that hath God for his portion, is more worth than all the millions of sinners in the world that have not God for their portion. God delights to reflect his glory upon his saints; for as there are none like to God, so there are none like to the people of God. Look, as God is a nonsuch, so his people are a nonsuch; and so in that 2 Sam. vii. 22, 23, 'Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God; for there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears; and what one nation in the earth is like thy people?' Look, as the excellency of God rises, so in a proportion the excellency of the saints rises; and look, as there are no gods in all the world that are so excellent as God is, so there are no people in all the world that are so excellent as the people of God are. Every one that hath God for his portion resembles the child of a king, as Zeba and Zalmunna said to Gideon of his brethren, Judges viii. 18. If you look upon their divine and heavenly origin, you shall find that they are born of the blood-royal, and that they are his sons who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords; yea, all the saints that have God for their portion are kings: Rev. i. 6, 'And hath made us kings

[1] Prov. xii. 26. A man that hath God for his portion, doth as much excel and out-shine such as have only Mammon for their portion, as the sun excels and out-shines the stars.

and priests unto God and his Father.'[1] They have the power, sovereignty, and authority of kings, they are privileged as kings, they are guarded as kings, they are adorned as kings, they are entertained as kings, they feed as kings, they feed high, they live upon God and Christ, and all the glory of heaven; and they are clothed as kings, they are clothed with Christ's righteousness, and with the garments of joy and gladness. Kings have great alliance, and so have the saints that have God for their portion. Kings have a very great influence, and so have they that have God for their portion. A man in rags that hath God for his portion is a more honourable person than the greatest monarch on earth that hath only the world for his portion. I have read of Alexander the Great, and of Pompey the Great, and of Charles the Great, and of Abner the Great, and of Herod the Great; but what were all these great men but grasshoppers to the saints that have God for their portion? Men that have had God for their portion have been very famous, illustrious, and glorious, when they have been friendless, and houseless, and penniless; yea, when they have been under the swords, and saws, and harrows of persecution.[2] When Maximian, the tyrant, had plucked out one of Paphnutius the Confessor's eyes, that good emperor Constantine saw such a lustre, beauty, and glory upon Paphnutius, that he fell upon him and kissed him; and he kissed that very hole most wherein one of the Confessor's eyes had been, as being most ravished and delighted with that hole. His name that hath God for his portion shall live, when the name of the wicked shall rot, Prov. x. 7, Ps. cxii. 9. His name shall be written in golden characters upon marble, when the name of the wicked shall be written in the dust.

The blind besotted world are sadly out, who are ready to set the crown of honour and happiness upon any heads, rather than upon theirs that have God for their portion. Look, as Samuel, beholding the beauty and stature of Eliab, would needs have him anointed, and the crown set upon his head, when the crown was designed for David at the sheep-fold, 1 Sam. xvi. 6, 12, so vain men are very apt to set the crown of happiness upon their heads who have the greatest share in this world, whenas the crown of happiness and blessedness is only to be set on their heads that have God for their portion. What the Queen of Sheba said of Solomon's servants, 'Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom,' 1 Kings x. 8, is here very applicable to the saints: 'Happy, happy, yea, thrice happy are those precious sons and daughters of Sion that have God for their portion.' A man that hath God for his portion shall live happily and die happily, and after death he shall remain happy to all eternity; and therefore we may well cry out, 'Oh, the happiness and blessedness of that man that hath God for his portion!' But,

(4.) *Fourthly*, If the saints have such an excellent, such a matchless, portion, oh, then, let them never *set their hearts and affections upon any earthly portions*, Prov. xxiii. 5. It is true, O Christian, thou mayest lay thy hand upon an earthly portion, but thou must never set thy heart upon an earthly portion: Ps. lxii. 10, 'If riches increase, set not thy heart upon them.' The Hebrews put the heart for the thoughts, affec-

[1] Rev. xvii. 14, v. 10; Daniel vii. 27; 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23; Ps. xxxiv. 14; Heb. i. 14; Ps. xlv. 13; 1 Cor. i 30. [2] As you may see in the 10th and 11th chaps. of the Hebrews.

tions, love, desire, joy, hope, confidence, &c. If riches increase, oh, set not thy thoughts upon them; if riches increase, oh, set not thy affections upon them; if riches increase, oh, set not thy love upon them, set not thy desires upon them, set not thy joy and delight upon them, nor never place thy hope or confidence in them. Oh! what a shame and dishonour would it be to see men of great estates to rake in dunghills, and to sweep channels, and to carry tankards of water, and to cry trifles up and down the streets! And is it not a greater shame, a greater dishonour, to see those that have the great God for their portion, to set their hearts and affections upon a little white and yellow clay? It was a generous speech of that heathen, Themistocles, who, seeing something glister like a pearl in the dark, scorned to stoop for it himself, but bid another stoop, saying, Stoop thou, for thou art not Themistocles.[1] Oh! it is below a generous Christian, a gracious Christian, a noble Christian, that hath God for his portion, to stoop to the things of this world. A true-bred Christian will set his feet upon those very things that the men of the world set their hearts: Rev. xii. 1, 'And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.' The church is compared to a woman for her weakness, for her lovingness, for her comeliness, and for her fruitfulness; and being clothed with the Sun of righteousness, she hath the moon, that is, the world, under her feet. The church treads under her feet all temporary and transitory things, which are as changeable as the moon. She treads upon all worldly and carnal enjoyments and contentments, as things below her, as things not worthy of her. What vanity is it for a great man to set his heart on bird's nests, and paper kites, that boys make fly in the air? And as great, yea, a greater vanity it is for the saints that have God for their portion, to set their hearts upon the poor little low things of this world. It is not for you to be a-fishing for gudgeons, but for towns, forts, and castles, said Cleopatra to Mark Antony. So say I, it is not for you that have God for your portion, to be a-fishing for the honours, riches, and preferments of the world; but for more grace, more holiness, more communion with God, more power against corruptions, more strength to withstand temptations, more abilities to bear afflictions, more sense of divine love, and more assurance of interest in Christ, and in all that glory and happiness that comes by Christ. When Alexander heard of the riches of India, he regarded not the kingdom of Macedonia, but gave away his gold; and when he was asked, what he kept for himself? he answered, *Spem majorum et meliorum*, the hope of better and greater things.[2] O sirs! when you look upon those riches of grace, those riches of glory, those riches of justification, those riches of sanctification, and those riches of consolation that are in that God that is your portion, how should you disregard, how should you despise, how should you scorn the great things, and the gay things of the world! It was a notable speech of Erasmus, if his wit were not too quick for his conscience.[3] I desire, said he, neither wealth nor honour, no more than a feeble horse doth an heavy cloak-bag. O Christians! you have many thousand excellencies

[1] Plutarch in Life of Themistocles.—G.
[2] Plutarch: Alexander.—G.
[3] Melchior Adam: Erasmus.—G.

in God to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in Christ to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in the Spirit to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in the covenant to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in the gospel to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in the ordinances to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in promises to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in prophecies to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in rare providences to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in the saints to set your affections upon; and therefore, for shame, set not your affections upon things below, set not your hearts upon things that perish, Col. iii. 1. A man can never come to set his heart upon any earthly portion, but that God will either embitter it, or lessen it, or cloud it, or wholly strip him of it; and therefore sit loose, I say again, sit loose in your affections to all worldly enjoyments. But,

(5.) *Fifthly*, If the saints have such a glorious, such an incomparable portion; then let them *be cheerful and comfortable under all worldly crosses, losses, and troubles*, Acts v. 17–42, Rom. v. 2–4. With what a Roman spirit do many vain men of great estates bear up under great losses and crosses; and shall not grace do more than nature? Shall not the Spirit of God do more than a Roman spirit? O sirs, how can you look upon God as your portion, and not bear up bravely under any worldly loss? Heb. x. 34. 'For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better, and an enduring substance.' They had God for their portion, and the joy of the Lord was their strength, and therefore they could rejoice in whatever damage came upon them by the hand of violence. And so David could comfort himself in his God, and encourage himself in his God, when Ziklag was burned, his wives and children carried captive, and the people in a readiness to stone him, 1 Sam. xxx. 6. Now all was gone, he looks up to God as his portion, and so he bears up bravely and cheerfully in the midst of all extremity of misery.[1] And so Habakkuk was a man of the same noble temper, as you may see in that Hab. iii. 17, 18: 'Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, yet I will rejoice in the Lord.' Ay, but that is nothing, to rejoice in the Lord as long as there is fruit in the vines; ay, but saith he, 'Though there be no fruit in the vines, yet I will rejoice in the Lord.' Ay, but that is nothing, to rejoice in the Lord so long as the labour of the olive doth not fail; ay, but saith he, 'Though the labour of the olive shall fail, yet I will rejoice in the Lord.' Ay, but that is nothing, to rejoice in the Lord so long as the fields do yield their meat; ay, but saith he, 'Though the fields shall yield no meat, yet I will rejoice in the Lord.' Ay, but that is nothing, to rejoice in the

[1] Better is that hell on earth which makes way for heaven, than that heaven on earth which makes way for hell.

Lord, so long as the flock is not cut off from the fold; ay, but saith he, 'Though the flock shall be cut off from the fold, yet I will rejoice in the Lord.' Ay, but that is nothing, to rejoice in the Lord, so long as there be herds in the stalls; aye, but saith he, 'Though there be no herd in the stalls, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation.' Habakkuk could rejoice in the Lord, and joy in that God that was his portion, not only when all delightful comforts and contentments should fail, but also when all necessary comforts and contentments should fail. Habakkuk was a man of raised spirit, he knew that he had that God for his portion that did contain in himself all comforts and contentments, and that could easily make up the want of any comfort or contentment, and that would certainly lie himself in the room of every comfort and contentment, that either his children should need or desire; and in the power of this faith he rejoices and triumphs in a day of thick darkness and gloominess: 1 Sam. i. 5, 18, 'But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion, for he loved Hannah, and her countenance was no more sad.' O my brethren, it doth no ways become those that have God for their portion to walk up and down the world with clouded countenances, with sadded countenances, or with dejected countenances, &c., and therefore, under all your crosses and losses, wipe your eyes, and walk up and down with pleasant countenances, with cheerful countenances, and with smiling countenances, and this will be an honour to God, and an honour to religion, and an honour to profession, and an honour to that saintship that is too much slighted and scorned in the world.

Indeed, when wicked men are exercised with crosses and losses, it is no wonder to see them take on like madmen, and see them take on bitterly, like Micah, when he cried out, 'They have taken away my gods, and what have I more? and what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee?' Wicked men's bags and goods are their gods; they are their portion, they are their all; and when these are gone, all is gone with them; when these are taken away, all is taken away with them; and therefore it is no wonder to hear them cry out, 'Undone, undone!' and to see them sit down and weep, as if they were resolved to drown themselves in their own tears. But you that have God for your portion, you have such a portion that shall never be taken from you. As Christ told Mary, 'Thou hast chosen the better part that shall never be taken from thee,' Luke x. 42; and therefore it highly concerns you to bear up bravely, as well when you have but little, as when you have much; and as well when you have nothing, as when you have everything. You shall be sure to enjoy all in God, and God in all; and what would you have more? Seneca once told a courtier that had lost his son, that he had no cause to mourn either for that or aught else, because Cæsar was his friend! O then, what little cause have the saints to mourn for this or that loss, considering that God is their friend; yea, which is more, that God is their portion. I have read of a company of poor Christians, who, being banished to some remote parts, and one standing by, seeing them pass along, said, that it was a very sad condition that those poor people were in, to be thus hurried from the society of men, and to be made companions with the beasts of the field; True, said another, it were a sad condition indeed, if they were carried to a

place where they could not find their God; but let them be of good cheer, for God goes along with them, and will follow them with the comforts of his grace wheresoever they go. Would it not make a man either sigh or laugh to see a man lament and take on bitterly for the loss of his shoe-strings, when his purse is safe; or for the loss of a little lumber, when all his goods are safe; or for the burning of a pig-stye, when his dwelling-house is safe; or for the loss of his scabbard, when his life is safe? And why, then, should a Christian lament and take on for the loss of this or that, so long as his God is safe, and his portion is safe? But,

(6.) *Sixthly,* If the saints have such an excellent and such a transcendent portion, as hath been discovered, then *away with all sinful shifts, ways, courses, and compliances to gain an earthly portion.* Was it not horrid, yea, hellish baseness in Ahab, who had a whole kingdom at his devotion, to possess himself of poor Naboth's vineyard, by false swearing, hypocrisy, treachery, cruelty, and blood? 1 Kings xxi. But, certainly, it is a far greater baseness and wickedness in those that have God for their portion, or at least pretend to have God for their portion, to be a-sharking,[1] and a-shifting, and a-complying with the lusts of men, and with the abominations of the times; and all to hold what they have, or else to raise themselves, and greaten themselves, and enrich themselves, by others' ruin. These men might do well to make that Jer. xvii. 11 their daily companion: 'As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.' The crafty fox in the fable hugged himself to think how he had cozened the crow of his breakfast; but when he had eaten it, and found himself poisoned with it, he wished that he had never meddled with it. O sirs! there is a day a-coming, wherein men shall wish that they had never laboured to sin themselves into honours, riches, preferments, high offices, and high places, when God shall let some scalding drops of his wrath to fall upon their spirits, who have sold all Christ's and Christians' concernments, and their own consciences, to gain riches and high offices! How will they curse the day wherein they were born, and be ready, by the knife or the halter, to put an end to their most wretched days! Oh what a sad and lamentable thing would it be to see men worth many thousands a-year a-purloining from others! But it is a far more sad and lamentable thing to see men who pretend to have God for their portion, to act all this, and more than this, and all to lay up an earthly portion for themselves and others. How many be there in these days who pretend very high towards God, and yet 'sell the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes,' Amos ii. 6; yea, that pollute the name of God, the worship of God; and that slay the souls of men for handfuls of barley, and pieces of bread; and that will say anything, or swear anything, or bow, or crouch to anything, for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, or to be put into one of the priest's offices, Ezek. xiii. 19, 1 Sam. ii. 36. O Christian, thou hast all honours and riches and preferments in that God that is thy portion; and why then shouldst thou go about to sin thyself into the enjoyment of those things which thou hast already in thy God? Hast thou forgot that

[1] 'Swindling.'—G.

Solomon got more hurt by his wealth, than ever he got good by his wisdom? and that David was best in a wilderness, and that our stomachs are usually worse in summer, and that the moon is furthest from the sun when it is fullest of light; and that all that a man gets by breaking with God and his conscience, he may put in his eye; and that the coal that the eagle carried from the sacrifice to her nest, set all on fire.[1] Have you forgotten what is said of Abraham in that Gen. xiii. 2, viz., 'That he was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold?' The Hebrew word *cabbedh*, that is here rendered *rich*, signifies *heavy*, to shew that riches are a very heavy burden, and oftentimes an hindrance in the way to heaven. Oh! how vain, how uncertain, how vexing, and how dividing are the great things of the world! How unfit do they make many men to live, and how unwilling do they make many men to die! Oh what is gold in the purse, when there is guilt upon the conscience! What are full bags, when sin and wrath are at the bottom of them! O sirs! you have an infinite fulness in that God that is your portion, and that fills all in all; and why then should you break the hedge to gain the world? But,

(7.) *Seventhly.* If the saints have such an excellent, glorious, and incomparable portion, 1 Cor. i. 31, oh then let them *glory in their portion, let them rejoice and delight themselves in their portion.* Man is a creature very apt and prone to glory in earthly portions, when he should be a-glorying in the Lord: Jer. ix. 23, 24, 'Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, saith the Lord;' Isa. xli. 16, 'Thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel;' and chap. xlv. 25, 'In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.' Oh how should the saints, that have God for their portion, make their boast of their God, and rejoice in their God, and glory in their God! Shall the men of the world glory in an earthly portion, and shall not a saint glory in his heavenly portion? Shall they glory in a portion that they have only in hope, and shall not a Christian glory in that portion that he hath already in hand? Shall they glory in a portion that they have only in reversion, and shall not a saint glory in that portion that he hath in present possession? Shall they glory in their hundreds and thousands a year, and shall not a Christian glory in that God that fills heaven and earth with his glory? In all the scriptures there is no one duty more pressed than this, of rejoicing in God; and indeed, if you consider God as a saint's portion, there is everything in God that may encourage the soul to rejoice in him, and there is nothing in God that may in the least discourage the soul from rejoicing and glorying in him.[2] O Christians, the 'joy of the Lord is your strength,' Neh. viii. 10; it is your doing strength, and your bearing strength, and your suffering strength, and your prevailing strength; it is your strength to work for God, and it is your strength

[1] Æsop: [Balorius].—G.

[2] Compare these scriptures together: Philip. iii. 1, iv. 4; Ezek. x. 17; Joel ii. 23; Ps. xxxiii. 1, lxxix. 12, 13, cxlix. 1, 2.

to wait on God, and it is your strength to exalt and lift up God, and it is your strength to walk with God; it is your strength to live, and your strength to die, and therefore be sure to keep up your joy in God. It is one of the saddest sights in all the world to see a man that hath God for his portion, with Cain to walk up and down this world with a dejected countenance. It was holy joy and cheerfulness that made the faces of several martyrs to shine as if they had been the faces of angels. One observes of Crispina, that she was cheerful when she was apprehended, and joyful when she was led to the judge, and merry when she was sent to prison, and so she was when bound, and when lift up in a cage, and when examined, and when condemned.[1] O Christians! how can you number up the several souls that you deject, the foul mouths that you open, and the bad reports that you bring upon the Lord and his ways by your sad, dejected, and uncomfortable walking! It is very observable that the Lord takes it so very unkindly at his people's hands when they go sighing, lamenting, and mourning up and down, whenas they should be a-rejoicing and a-delighting of themselves in him and his goodness, that he threatens to pursue them to the death with all manner of calamities and miseries upon that very score: Deut. xxviii. 47, 48, 'Because thou servest not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things, therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things; and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck until he have destroyed thee.' But,

(8.) *Eighthly.* If the saints have such a great, such a large, and such an all-sufficient portion as hath been shewed they have, *then certainly they shall never want anything that is good for them.* David tells you that his cup run over, Ps. xxiii. 5, 6. The words are an allusion to the Hebrew feasts. David's table was richly and nobly spread, both in sight and spite of all his enemies. In one God is every good; and what can he want that enjoys that God? God is a bundle of all goodness and sweetness. And look, as God is the best God, so he is the greatest and the fullest good. He can as easily fill the most capacious souls up to the very brim with all inward and outward excellencies and mercies, as Christ did once fill those water-pots of Galilee up to the very brim with wine, John ii. 1–11. If God hath enough in himself for himself, then certainly he hath enough in himself for us; that water that can fill the sea can much more easily fill my cup or my pot: 'My people shall be satisfied with goodness, saith the Lord,' Jer. xxxi. 14; 'And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good; and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart, and with my whole soul,' Jer. xxxii. 40, 41; 'My God shall supply all your need,' Philip. iv. 19, or, 'My God shall (πληρωσει) fill up all your need,' as he did the widow's vessels in that 2 Kings iv. 3–6. Godliness hath the promise both of this life and that which is to come, 1 Tim. iv. 8. He that hath God for his portion shall have all other things cast into his store, as paper and packthread is cast into the bargain, or as an handful of corn is cast into the corn you buy, or as huck-

[1] August. in Ps. cxxxvii. [Clarke as before.—G.]

sters cast in an overcast among the fruit you buy, or as an inch of measure is given into an ell of cloth, Mat. vi. 25, 31–33. O sirs, how can that man be poor, how can that man want, that hath the Lord of heaven and earth for his portion? Surely he cannot want light that enjoys the sun, nor he cannot want bread that hath all sorts of grain in his barns, nor he cannot want water that hath the fountain at his door; no more can he want anything that hath God for his portion, who is everything, and who will be everything to every gracious soul. O sirs! the thought, the tongue, the desire, the wish, the conception, all fall short of God, and of that great goodness that he hath laid up for them that fear him, Ps. xxxi. 19; and why then should they be afraid of wants? Ps. civ. 10–31. How doth that pretty bird the robin-redbreast cheerfully sit and sing in the chamber window, and yet knows not where he shall make the next meal, and at night must take up his lodging in a bush. Oh what a shame is it that men that have God for their portion should act below this little bird. I have read of famous Mr Dod, who is doubtless now high in heaven,[1] who intended to marry, was much troubled with fears and cares how he should live in that condition, his incomes being so small that they would but maintain him in a single condition; and looking out at a window, and seeing a hen scraping for food for her numerous brood about her, thought thus with himself: This hen did but live before it had these chickens, and now she lives with all her little ones; upon which he added this thought also, I see the fowls of the air neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns, and yet my heavenly Father feeds them, Mat. vi. 25; and thus he overcame his fears of wanting.[2] O Christians! you have such a Father for your portion, as will as soon cease to be, as he will cease to supply you with all things necessary for your good. It was a good saying of one, I would desire neither more nor less than enough; for I may as well die of a surfeit as of hunger, and he is rich enough that lacketh not bread, and high enough in dignity that is not forced to serve. Plutarch's reasoning is good, τα τῶν φιλῶν παντα κοινα, friends have all things in common; but God is our friend, *ergo* we cannot want; a rare speech from an heathen. Rather than Israel should want, did not God feed them with manna in the wilderness? and rather than Elijah and the widow should not have their wants supplied, did not God work a miracle, by causing the handful of meal in the barrel, and the little oil in the cruse, to last and hold out till he supplied them in another way? Rather than Elijah shall want, God will feed him with a raven, and by that miraculous operation save him from a perishing condition. O sirs! all the attributes of God are so engaged for you that you cannot want, and all the promises of God are so engaged to you that you cannot want, and all the affections of God are so set upon you that you cannot want; and why then should you fear wants? O sirs! hath God given you his Son, his Spirit, his grace, his glory, yea, himself, and will he deny you lesser things,[3] Rom. viii. 32. Hath he given you those things that are more worth than ten thousand

[1] Died 1645, aged 96; for other references to this holy and venerable man, see Index, *sub nomine*.—G.

[2] See Life of Dod in Brook's 'Puritans,' Vol. iii. *seq.*—G.

[3] Gregory the great was wont to say, that he was a poor man, whose soul was void of grace, not he whose coffers were empty of money.

worlds, and will he not give you bread to eat, and raiment to put on? Hath he given you those spiritual riches that infinitely exceed and excel all the riches, rubies, and pearls in the world; and will he deny you a little money in your purses to bear your charges till you come to heaven? Hath he given you a crown, and will he deny you a crust? Hath he given you his royal robes, and will he deny you a few rags? Hath he given you a royal palace, and will he deny you a poor cottage to shelter you from the stormy winter and from the scorching summer? yea, doth he feed his enemies, and clothe his enemies, and protect his enemies, and provide for his enemies, which are the generation of his wrath and curse, and will he not do as much for you, O ye of little faith? Will he do so much for them that hate him, and will he not do as much for you that love him? Doubtless he will. Will he feed the ravens, and provide for the ox and the ass, and clothe the grass of the field; and will he suffer you, who are his love, his joy, his delight, to starve at his feet, for want of necessaries? Surely no.

But suppose you were under many real wants, yet certainly this very consideration, that the Lord is your portion, should quiet your hearts, and bear up your spirits bravely under them all. Jerome tells us of one Didymus, a godly preacher, who was blind; Alexander, a godly man, coming to see him, asked him, whether he was not sorely troubled and afflicted for want of his sight. Oh yes, said Dydimus, it is a very great affliction and grief to me. Whereupon Alexander chid him, saying, Hath God given you the excellency of an angel, of an apostle, and are you troubled for that which rats and mice, and brute beasts enjoy? O sirs! if God hath given you himself for a portion, then certainly it is a sinful thing, a shameful thing, an unworthy thing for you to be so troubled, afflicted, and grieved, because you want this and that worldly contentment and enjoyment, which God bestows upon such whose wickedness hath debased them below the ox and the ass, I mean, men of beastly spirits, and beastly principles, and beastly practices, Isa. i. 2, 3. Look, as Benjamin's mess was five times greater than his brethren's, Gen. xliii. 34; so those that have God for their portion have five thousand times a greater portion than the wicked of the world, whose portion only lies in perishing trifles, and in tried vanities; and therefore there is no just reason, no Scripture reason, why they should be afraid of wants. But,

(9.) *Ninthly*, If the saints have such a great, such a large, such an all-sufficient, such an infinite, and such an incomparable portion, as hath been made evident they have, oh then *away with all inordinate cares for the things of this life.* Oh say to all vexing, wasting, distracting, and disturbing cares, as Ephraim once said to his idols, 'Get you hence, for what have I any more to do with you?' Hosea xiv. 8. Christ's counsel should lie warm upon every man's heart that hath God for his portion, 'Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?' Mat. vi. 31, and so should the apostle's, 'Cast all your care on him; for he careth for you,' 1 Peter v. 7, and so should the psalmist's also, 'Cast thy burden (or as the Greek well turns it, thy care) upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved,' Ps. lv. 22. Some write, that lions sleep with their eyes open and shining; but the Lion of the tribe

of Judah, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the keeper of Israel, never slumbers nor sleeps; his eyes are always open upon the upright; he still stands sentinel for his people's good, and therefore why should inordinate cares eat up the hearts of Christians? O Christians! of all burdens the burden of carking cares will sit the heaviest upon your spirits. There is no burden that will bow you and break you like this. Inordinate cares vex the heart, they divide the heart, they scratch and tear the heart, they pierce and wound the heart through and through with many sorrows, 1 Tim. vi. 10. Inordinate cares will either crowd out duties, as in Martha, Luke x. 40, or else they will crowd into duties and spoil duties, as in that Luke viii. 14, 'the cares of the world choke the word.' Look, as Pharaoh's ill-favoured lean kine ate up the fat, Gen. xli. 4, so all inordinate ill-favoured cares will eat up all those fat and noble cares for God, for his glory, for heaven, for holiness, for grace, for glory, for power against corruptions, for strength to resist temptations, and for support and comfort under afflictions, &c., with which the soul should be filled and delighted. Oh that you would for ever remember these few things, to prevent all inordinate, distrustful, and distracting cares.

[1.] First, *That they are a dishonour and a reproach to the all-sufficiency of God;* as if he were not able to supply all your wants, and to answer all your desires, and to succour you in all your distresses, and to deliver you out of all your calamities and miseries, &c.

[2.] Secondly, *Inordinate cares are a dishonour and a reproach to the omnisciency of God.*[1] As if your wants were not as well known to him as his own works, and as if he had not a fixed eye upon all the straits and trials that lies upon you, and as if he did not know every burden that makes you to groan, and did not behold every affliction that makes you to sigh, and did not observe every tear that drops from your eyes, &c.; whereas his eye is still upon you: Deut. xi. 11, 12, 'But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven; a land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year, unto the end of the year.' And do you think that he will not have as great a care, and as tender a regard of you who are his jewels, his treasure, his joy, yea, who are the delight of his soul, and the price of his Son's blood?

[3.] Thirdly, *Inordinate cares are a dishonour and a reproach to the authority of God.* As if the earth were not the Lord's and the fulness thereof, and as if all creatures were not at his command and at his dispose, whenas he is the great proprietary, and all is his by primitive right, and all the creatures are at his service, and are ready at a word of command to serve where he pleaseth, and when he pleaseth, and as he pleaseth, and whom he pleaseth, Ps. xxiv. 1; Ps. l. 10.

[4.] Fourthly, *Inordinate cares are a dishonour and a reproach to the mercy, bounty, and liberality of God.* They proclaim God to be a hard master, and not to be of so free, so noble, and so generous a spirit, as Scripture and the experiences of many thousands speaks him to be. I have read of a duke of Milan, that marrying his daughter to a son of England, he made a dinner of thirty courses, and at every course

[1] Ps. cxxxix. 11; Ps. xl. 5; Job. xxxi. 4; 2 Chron. xvi. 9, &c.

he gave so many gifts to every guest at the table, as there were dishes in the course. Here was a rich and royal entertainment, here was noble bounty indeed; but this bounty is not to be named in the day wherein the bounty and liberality of God to his people is spoken of. Princes' treasures have been often exhausted and drawn dry, but the treasures of God's bounty and liberality were never, nor never shall be, exhausted or drawn dry.[1] O sirs! you are as well able to tell the stars of heaven, and to number the sands of the sea, as you are able to number up the mercies and favours of God that attends his people in one day, yea, that attends them in one hour of the day, or in one minute of an hour; such is his liberality and bounty towards them. God is always best, when he is most in the exercise of his bounty and liberality towards his people. His favours and mercies seldom come single. There is a series, a concatenation of them, and every former draws on a future; yea, such is the bounty and liberality of God, that he never takes away one mercy, but he hath another ready to lay in the room of it; as Joshua began to shine before Moses his candle was put out; and before Joshua went to bed, Othniel the son of Kenaz was risen up to judge. Eli was not gathered to his fathers, before Samuel appeared hopeful; nor Sarah was not taken away till Rebekah was ready to come in her stead. The Jews have a saying, that never doth there die any illustrious man, but there is another born as bright on the same day.

[5.] Fifthly, *Inordinate cares are a reproach and a dishonour to the fidelity of God.* As if he were not the faithful witness, the faithful God, that hath bound himself by promise, by covenant, and by oath, to take care of his people, and to provide for his people, and to look after the welfare of his people.[2] God is that ocean and fountain from whence all that faithfulness that is in angels and men do issue and flow, and his faithfulness is the rule and measure of all that faithfulness that is in all created beings, and his faithfulness is unchangeable and perfect. Though the angels fell from their faithfulness, and Adam fell from his, yet it is impossible that ever God should fall from his. God's faithfulness is a foundation-faithfulness; it is that foundation upon which all our faith, hope, prayers, praises, and obedience stands; and therefore, whoever is unfaithful, God will be sure to shew himself a faithful God, in making good all that he hath spoken concerning them that fear him. I had rather, said Plutarch, that men should say there was never any such person in the world as Plutarch, rather than say that Plutarch is unfaithful. Men were better say that there is no God, than to say that God is an unfaithful God; and yet this is the constant language of inordinate cares. O sirs! God's goodness inclines him to make good promises, precious promises; and his faithfulness engages him to make those promises good, 2 Peter i. 4. If the word be once gone out of his mouth, heaven and earth shall sooner pass away, than one jot of that word shall fail, Mat. v. 18. Men say and unsay what they have said; they often eat their words as soon as they have spoke them; but so will not God. This faithfulness of God Joshua stoutly asserts to the height; he throws down the gauntlet, and doth, as it were, challenge

[1] Mercy and bounty is as essential to God, as light is to the sun, or as heat is to the fire.

[2] Rev. i. 5, iii. 14; Isa. xlix. 7; 1 Cor. i. 9, x. 13; 2 Thes. iii. 3; Heb. x. 23; Rev. xix. 11; Heb. vi. 13–19.

all Israel to shew but that one thing that God had failed them in of all the good things that he had promised, Joshua xxiii. 14, 15. If God in very faithfulness afflicts his people to make good his threatenings, oh, how much more in faithfulness will he preserve and provide for his people, to make good his promises! Ps. cxix. 75. God hath never broke his word nor cracked his credit by deceiving, or by compounding for one penny less in the pound than what he hath promised to make good. God stands upon nothing more than his faithfulness, and glories in nothing more than his faithfulness; and yet all inordinate cares leaves a blot upon his faithfulness. But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, *Inordinate cares are a reproach to the pity and compassion of God*, Mat. vi. 32. They speak out God to be a God of no pity, of no bowels, of no tenderness; whereas God is all pities, all bowels, all compassions, all tendernesses: Ps. ciii. 13, 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.' There is an ocean of love and pity in a father's heart to his children, Gen. xxxiii. 13, 14; and there is much more in God's to his. Hence he is called the Father by way of eminency; and indeed, originally and properly, there is no Father to him, there is no Father like him, there is no Father besides him; and he is called the Father of all mercies, because all the mercies, all the pities, all the bowels, all the compassions that are in all the fathers on earth, are but a drop of his ocean, a spark of his flame, a mite out of his treasury.[1] That father that sees his child in want, and pities him not, and pitying, if able, relieves him not, forfeits the very name of father, and may better write himself monster than man. I have read of a young man who, being at sea in a mighty storm, was very merry when all the passengers were at their wit's end for fear, &c.; and when he was asked the reason of his mirth, he answered, that the pilot of the ship was his father, and he knew that such was his father's pity and compassion, that he would have a care of him. O sirs! whatever storms the people of God may be in, yet such is his pity and compassion towards them, that he will be sure to have a care of them. The Lord is all that to his people, and will be all that to his people, yea, and infinitely more than that which *Isis Mammosa* was to the Egyptians, a god full of dugs; and whilst he hath a breast, there is no reason why his children should fear the want of milk. That golden promise, Heb. xiii. 5, were there no more, hath enough in it to steel and arm the soul against all inordinate cares. The Greek hath five negatives, and may thus be rendered: 'I will not, not leave thee, neither will I not, not forsake thee.'[2] Five times, as one well observes, is this precious promise renewed, that we may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of its consolations, that we may milk out and be delighted with the abundance of its glory. O sirs! shall the word, the promise, the protest of a king, arm us and cheer us up against all inordinate cares, and shall not the word, the promise, the protest of the King of kings, so often repeated, much more arm us against all base, distrustful, and distracting cares? O Christians! the remembrance of this blessed truth, that God

[1] Eph. iii. 15. God is *pater miserationum; tam pius nemo, tam pater nemo*, saith Bernard.

[2] οὐ μή οὐ δε οὐ μή, never, in no wise, in no case; whatever I do, I will not do this, whatever shift I make.

is your portion, should make you sing care away, as that famous martyr said, 'My soul is turned to her rest; I have taken a sweet nap in Christ's lap; and therefore I will now sing away care, and will be careless, according to my name.'[1] If the sense of God's being a man's portion will not burn up all those inordinate cares that commonly fills his head, and that disturbs, and distracts, and racks his heart, I profess I cannot tell what will. It was a strange speech of Socrates, a heathen: Since God is so careful for you, saith he, what need you be careful for anything yourselves? But,

(10.) *Tenthly,* If God be the saints' portion, *then all is theirs.* As he said, *Christus meus et omnia,* Christ is mine, and all is mine; so may a Christian say, *Deus meus et omnia mea,* God is mine, and all is mine.[2] If God be thy portion, then heaven and earth are thine; then all the good and all the glory of both worlds are thine; then all the upper and the nether springs are thine: 1 Cor. iii. 21, 'All things are yours;' ver. 22, 'whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours.' The scope of the apostle is not to shew that such as are saints, and have God for their portion, have a civil and common interest in all men's earthly possessions; but it is to shew that all things are prepared, ordered, and ordained by God to serve the interest of his people, to work for the good of his people, and to help on the happiness and blessedness of his people. All the gifts, and all the graces, and all the experiences, and all the excellencies, and all the mercies of the ministers of the gospel, whether they are ordinary or extraordinary, are all for the information, edification, confirmation, consolation, and salvation of the church; and all the good and all the sweet of the creatures are to be let out for the good of the people of God, and for the comfort of the people of God, and for the encouragement of the people of God; all changes, all conditions, all occurrences, shall be sure 'to work together for their good,' Rom. viii. 28, that have God for their portion. Whatever the present posture of things are, or whatever the future state of things shall be, yet they shall all issue in their good, in their profit, in their advantage, that have God for their portion. Look, as the wife communicates in her husband's honour and wealth, and as the branches partake of the fatness and sweetness of the root, and as the members derive sense and motion from the head; so the saints communicate in all that good which in God is communicable to them. God is communicative, as the fig-tree, the vine, and the olive is. O sirs! if God be your portion, then every promise in the book of God is yours, and every attribute in the book of God is yours, and every privilege in the book of God is yours, and every comfort in the book of God is yours, and every blessing in the book of God is yours, and every treasury in the book of God is yours, and every mercy in the book of God is yours, and every ordinance in the book of God is yours, and every sweet in the book of God is yours; if God be yours, all is yours. When Alexander asked king Porus, who was then his prisoner,[3] how he would be used? he answered in one word, Βασιλικῶς, like a king. Alexander again

[1] John Carless in a letter to Mr Philops.—Acts and Mon. fol. 1743, &c. [Foxe by Townsend, vol. viii. p. 172, and *sub nomine.*—G.]

[2] Cf. Sibbes's Works, Vol. ii., note *u*, p. 195.—G. [3] Plutarch *in Apophthegmata.*

replying, Do you desire nothing else? No, saith he, all things are in Βασιλικῶς, in this one word, *like a king;* so all things are in this one word, 'The Lord is my portion.' He that hath God for his portion, hath all things, because God is all things; he is a good that contains all good in himself. All the good that is to be found in honours, in riches, in pleasures, in preferments, in husband, in wife, in children, in friends, &c., is to be found only and eminently in God. You have all in that great God that is the saints' great all, Col. iii. 11. But,

(11.) *Eleventhly,* If God be the saint's portion, and such a portion as I have at large discovered him to be, then certainly *God is no injurious portion, no mischievous portion, no hurtful portion, no prejudicial portion.* Surely there can be no danger, no hazard, no hurt in having God for a man's portion. Oh! but oftentimes earthly portions do a great deal of hurt, a great deal of mischief; they ruin men's bodies, they blast and blot men's names, and they lay men open to such sins, and snares, and temptations, that for ever undoes their immortal souls. Oh what a trappan[1] are worldly portions to most men! yea, what fuel are they to corruption! and how often do they lay persons open to destruction! Eccles. v. 13, 'There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.' Though riches in themselves are God's blessings, yet through the corruptions that are in men's hearts, they prove weapons of wickedness and engines to evil. 'There is a sore evil,' the Septuagint reads it, *infirmitas pessima,* a sore disease; Pagnin and Arias Montanus reads it *mala infirmitas,* an evil disease; others read it *languor pessimus,* a sore weakness. The Hebrew word, *cholah,* signifies such a sore evil as sticks close and is not easily removed; they are kept a thousand thousand ways for their hurt. Latimer, in a sermon before king Edward the Sixth, tells a story of a rich man, that when he lay upon his sick bed, some told him that came to visit him, that by all they were able to discern he was a dead man; he was no man for this world. As soon as ever he heard these words, saith Latimer, What, must I die? said the sick man: send for a physician; wounds, sides, heart, must I die, and leave these riches behind me? wounds, sides, heart, must I die, and leave these things behind me? and nothing else could be got from him but wounds, heart, sides, must I die, and leave these riches behind me? Do you think, sirs, that riches were not kept for this man's hurt? Without a peradventure in this man's heart was writ 'the god of this present world.'

And the same father Latimer elsewhere saith, that if he had an enemy to whom it was lawful to wish evil, he would chiefly wish him great store of riches, for then he should never enjoy any quiet. As I have read of one Pheraulas,[2] a poor man, on whom king Cyrus bestowed so much that he knew not what to do with his riches; being wearied out with care in keeping of them, he desired to live quietly, though poor, as he had done before, than to possess all those riches with discontent; therefore he gave away all his wealth, desiring only to enjoy so much as might relieve his necessities, and give him a quiet possession of himself.

Queen Mary said, when she was dying, that if they should open her

[1] 'Trepan,' = snare.—G. [2] Xenophon, *Cyrop.* ii. 3, sec. 6, 7, and viii. 3.—G.

when she was dead, they should find Calice[1] lying at the bottom of her heart, implying that the loss of it broke her heart.

The historian observes that the riches of Cyprus invited the Romans to hazard many dangerous fights for the conquering of it.

When the Indians had taken some of the Spaniards, who made gold their god, they filled their mouths with it, and so choked them; they melted their gold, and poured it down their throats, resolving that they should have their fill of gold, who preferred gold before the lives and souls of men.[2] How many millions of bodies and souls have the Spaniards destroyed, to possess themselves of the riches of the West Indies! But let me a little further shew you how hurtful, how dangerous and pernicious earthly riches, earthly portions, are oftentimes to their owners; and this I shall do by a brief induction of these particulars.

[1.] First, *Riches encourage and advantage persons to make the strongest and the stoutest opposition against anything that is good.*[3] Rich persons usually are the greatest opposers both of religion and of religious persons: James ii. 6, 7, 'But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment-seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called?' And this you may see also in the rich citizens of Jerusalem, and in king Herod; and the very same spirit you may run and read in the scribes and pharisees, who were the rich and the great men of the times, and the very same opposing spirit lives and works strongly in the hearts of many great ones this day. But,

[2.] Secondly, *Earthly portions do estrange the heart from God;* as you see in the prodigal, Luke i. 5, and in those wealthy monsters that say unto God, 'Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways: what is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?' Job xxi. 13–15. But,

[3.] Thirdly, *As earthly portions do estrange the soul from God; so they do often swell the soul, and puff up the soul,* Ps. x. 1–7, &c. Salvian counts pride the rich man's inheritance. Men's minds ebb and flow with their means, their blood commonly rises with their outward good. Pride, saith Bernard, is the rich man's cousin, it blows him up like a bladder with a quill, it makes him grow secure, and so prepares him for sudden ruin: so that he may well sing his part with those sad souls, 'What hath pride profited us? or what profit hath the pomp of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like as a shadow, and as a post that passeth by,' Wisd. v. 8, 9. But,

[4.] Fourthly, *Earthly riches commonly cast men into a deep sleep of security.*[4] Thus they served David in that Ps. xxx. 6, 7, and thus they served the fool in the Gospel, Luke xii. 16–22, and thus they served the old world; and so they did Sodom and Gomorrah afterwards, and so they did the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and their hosts, Judges viii. 11, 12, and so did the people of Laish, in that

[1] 'Calais.'—G.

[2] Done to Crassus. See Index, *sub nomine.*—G.

[3] Not only the history of the ten persecutions, but also all other histories do very strongly evince this.

[4] Amos i. 12–14; ponder the words.

Judges xviii. 6–28; and so the peace, plenty, and prosperity of the Bohemians cast them into so great a security, that they began to grow very loose and base in their lives, and very cold and careless in the things of God, and in all their soul-concernments; insomuch that many of their most pious and prudent men did presage, that certainly some horrible storm would suddenly arise, and that some dreadful tempest without all peradventure would beat upon them; and accordingly it came to pass. Alexander slew him whom he found asleep on the watch; and God finding the Bohemians in a deep sleep of sin and security, he brought the devouring sword upon them. Mercury could not kill Argus, till he had cast him into a sleep, and with an enchanted rod closed his eyes. No more can the devil or the world hurt any man, till by dandling of him on the knee of prosperity, they come to lull him asleep in the bed of security. But,

[5.] Fifthly, *Earthly riches do frequently divert the souls of men from embracing and closing with the golden seasons and opportunities of grace.* Riches are the thorns that choke the word, and that make men barren and unfruitful under the word, Mat. xiii. 22. Rich Felix had no leisure to hear poor Paul, though the hearing of a sermon might have saved his soul, and made him happy in both worlds, Acts xxiv. 24–27; and the rich fool in the Gospel was so taken up in pulling down his barns, and in building of them greater, and in bestowing of his fruits and his goods, that he had no time to prevent the ruin of his soul, Luke xii. 15–22; and Dives was so taken up with his riches, pomp, state, and with his royal apparel, royal attendance, and royal fare, that he never minded heaven, nor never dreaded hell, till he did awake with everlasting flames about his ears, Luke xvi. 19–31. Sicily is so full of sweet flowers, that dogs cannot hunt there:[1] and so what do all the sweet profits, pleasures, and preferments of this world, but make men lose the scent of grace, the scent of glory, the scent of holiness, and the scent of happiness.[2] It is true, rich men will have their eating times, and their drinking times, and their trading times, and their sporting times, and their sleeping times, and that which is worse, their sinning times, &c. But ah, how rare is it to see rich men covet after hearing times and praying times, and reading times, and meditating times, and mourning times, and repenting times, and reforming times. Rich men will have time for everything, but to honour God, exalt Christ, obey the Spirit, love the saints, attend ordinances, and save their own immortal souls. Oh the time, the thoughts, the strength, the spirits that rich men spend and consume upon their riches, whilst their precious souls lie a-bleeding to death, and an eternity of misery is posting upon them. But,

[6.] Sixthly, *Earthly riches commonly load the soul with a multitude of cares, fears, griefs, and vexations, which do mightily disturb the soul, distract the soul, yea, often rack, torture, and torment the soul.* What if such a friend should be unfaithful to his trust? what if such a ship should miscarry? what if such an one should break, that owes me so much? what if my title to such a lordship should not

[1] Query 'reed'?—G. [2] *Diodorus Siculus* [*sub voce.*—G.]

[3] Some say, where gold grows, no plant will prosper; certainly, where riches bear the bell, no good, no grace, will thrive or prosper.

prove good? what if flaws be found in my evidences for such and such lands? what if fire should consume my habitation? what if thieves should rob me of my treasure? &c., and what do all these *whats* tend to, but to break a man's heart in a thousand pieces? But,

[7.] Seventhly, *Earthly riches are many times fuel for the greatest and the grossest sins;* as pride, oppression, revenge, cruelty, tyranny, gluttony, drunkenness, wantonness, and all manner of uncleanness and filthiness. Riches are a bawd to those very sins that require the largest stock to maintain .them. Vices are more costly than virtues. Virtue observes a mean, but vice knows none; vice is all for extremes; witness the prodigious wickedness of these times.[1] But,

[8.] Eighthly, *Earthly riches are many times reserved as witnesses against the rich in the great day of their account.* James v. 1–3, 'Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.' The rust of the rich man's cankered gold and his moth-eaten apparel shall be brought in as dreadful witnesses against him in the great day. The poet feigned Pluto to be the god of riches and of hell too, as if they were inseparable. By all these particulars you see how hurtful, how prejudicial earthly portions often prove to their owners.

Oh, but now God is a portion that will never hurt a man, that will never harm a man, that will never in the least prejudice a man. Among all 'the spirits of just men made perfect,' Heb. xii. 22, 23, there is not one to be found that will give in his witness against this sweet and blessed truth that I have asserted; and among all the saints on earth you shall not find one, but will with both hands readily subscribe to this glorious maxim, viz., That God is such a portion, that hath never hurt them, that hath never harmed them, yea, that he is such a portion that hath done them good all their days, and one upon whom they have lived, and by whom they have been maintained ever since they 'hung upon the breasts,' Ps. xxii. 9. Holy Polycarp hit it, when he said, 'This sixty-eight years have I served the Lord, and he never did me any hurt; and shall I now forsake him?'[2] Surely no. But now earthly riches, for the most part, do a world of mischief and hurt to their owners. Oh the souls that earthly riches have pierced through and through with many sorrows! Oh the minds that earthly riches have blinded! Oh the hearts that earthly riches have hardened! Oh the consciences that earthly riches have benumbed! Oh the wills that earthly riches have perverted! Oh the affections that earthly riches have disordered! Oh the lives that earthly riches have corrupted! And Oh the souls that earthly riches have destroyed! But,

[9.] Ninthly and lastly, *Earthly riches, for the most part, make men unwilling to die.* Oh how terrible is the king of terrors to the rich and the great ones of the world, 1 Sam. xxviii. 20, Dan. v. 1–7. And so Henry Beaufort, that rich and wretched cardinal, in the reign of Henry the Sixth, perceiving death at hand, spoke thus: Wherefore

[1] Compare these scriptures together, Ps. lxxiii. 1–13, Deut. xxxii. 15–17, Jer. v. 7, 8 Hosea xiii. 6, James v. 1–7.

[2] Martyred.—G.

should I die, being so rich? If the whole realm would save my life, I am able either by policy to get it, or by riches to buy it; fie, quoth he, will not death be hired? will money do nothing?[1] It is reported that Queen Elizabeth could not endure so much as to hear death named; and Sigismund the emperor, and Louis the Eleventh, king of France, straitly charged all their servants, that when they saw them sick, they should never dare to name that bitter word death in their ears. Vitellius, an emperor of Rome—a notorious glutton, as you may easily judge, by his having at one supper two thousand fishes, and seven thousand birds—when he could not fly death, he made himself drunk that he might not be sensible of the pangs of death.[2] It was a very prudent and Christian speech of Charles the Fifth to the duke of Venice, who when he had shewed him the glory of his princely palace and earthly paradise, instead of admiring it, or him for it, he only returned him this grave and serious *memento, Hæc sunt quæ faciunt invitos mori*, these are the things which make us unwilling to die, &c. And by daily experience we find that of all men wealthy men are most unwilling to die. Oh, but now God is such a portion as fits and disposes the soul to die, yea, as makes the soul look and long for death, and that makes death more desirable than life itself. A man that hath God for his portion, that hath God in his arms, may well sing it out with old Simeon, 'Lord, let thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes hath seen thy salvation,' Luke ii. 25, 29, 30; and with Paul, 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ,' Philip. i. 23; and with the church, 'Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountain of spices,' Cant. viii. 14; and, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly,' Rev. xxii. 20. Did Christ die for me that I might live with him? I will not therefore desire to live long from him. All men go willingly to see him whom they love, and shall I be unwilling to die that I may see him whom my soul loves? Surely no. Augustine longed to die that he might see that head that was once crowned with thorns. The dying words of my young Lord Harrington were these: 'O my God, when shall I be with thee?'[3] Cyprian could receive the cruellest sentence of death with a *Deo gratias;* and holy Andrew saluted the cross on which he was to be crucified, saying, 'Take me from men, and restore me to my master.' And so Laurence Saunders, when he was come to the stake at which he was to be burnt, he kissed it, saying, 'Welcome the cross of Christ, welcome everlasting life.[4] But,

(12.) Twelfthly, If God be the saints' portion, oh then *let the saints still think of God, and look upon God under this notion.* A man that hath God for his portion should always have very high, noble, sweet, and precious thoughts of God. It becomes not those that have God for their portion to be always looking upon God as an angry God, or as a displeased Father, or as an incensed judge, or as an enraged enemy, or as a bitter friend. When God would make known his name, his nature, his glory to Moses, he proclaims himself to be, 'The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keep-

[1] A great man wrote thus a little before his death, *Spes et fortuna valete.*
[2] Erasmus hit it when he said, *Timor mortis pejor quam ipsa mors.*
[3] Funeral Sermon by Stock, 1610.—G. [4] Clark, *as before.*—G.

ing mercies for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin,' Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. And certainly to keep up such precious thoughts and notions as these are of God, is that work of works that lies upon every man's hand that hath God for his portion. O sirs! there is a very great aptness and proneness, even in those that have God for their portion, to have black, dark, hard, dismal, and dreadful thoughts and apprehensions of God, as you may see in Asaph, Heman, Job, David, &c.[1] By nature we are as full of hard thoughts of God, as hell is full of sin; and when the heart is not mightily over-awed by the Spirit of God and overpowered by the grace of God, there all manner of dark and dismal apprehensions of God abounds. Besides, Satan knows very well that our corrupt natures are made up of sad and hard thoughts of God; and therefore he will use all his power and craft to blow up every spark, every hard thought of God, into a flame, especially when outward troubles and inward distresses are upon us. What says Satan? Dost thou think that God loves thee? O Christian, when he deals thus sharply and severely with thee, doth he pretend kindness to thee, and yet hide his face from thee, and set thee up as a mark to shoot at? How can he be thy friend, who hath cast thee down at thine enemies' feet, and given thee up into their paws and jaws? How canst thou think that he hath any pity and compassion towards thee, who makes no better provision for thee? What vanity is it to believe that he will give thee a crown, that denies thee a crust? And that he will give thee an house not made with hands, and yet suffer thee to be turned out of house and home? And that he will do so much for thee in another world, who doth so little for thee in this world? &c. And thus Satan takes his opportunities to provoke corrupt nature and to kill the soul with hard thoughts of God. And certainly that Christian is a very great stranger to his own heart, that is not able to say from experience that it is one of the highest and hardest works in this world to keep up good and gracious thoughts of God, to keep up honourable and noble thoughts of God, in a suffering condition or under dark and dismal dispensations. Oh, but now those that have God for their portion, they should abandon and abhor all hard thoughts of God, yea, how severe soever the dealings of God are towards them, yet it is their duty and their glory to keep up very sweet and precious thoughts of God, Ps. lxxiii. 1. O sirs! the more choice and honourable thoughts you keep up of God in your own souls, the more you will love the Lord, and the more you will delight in the Lord, and the more content and satisfaction you will take in the Lord. Such Christians that take a pleasure to be still a-representing of God to themselves in the most hideous, terrible, and amazing shapes, they kill their love and their joy, and they create a hell of torments in their own souls. Well, Christians! let me put a cluster of the grapes of Canaan into your hands at once, and that by telling of you, that the more glorious and blessed thoughts you keep up in your souls of God, the more spiritual, the more frequent, the more fervent, the more abundant, the more constant, and the more unwearied you will be in the work of the Lord, and the more all your graces will be acted, exercised, strengthened, and increased, yea, and the more your evidences for heaven will be cleared, your gracious experiences multiplied, your

[1] Ps. lxxvii. and lxxxviii; Job iii.; Ps. lxxiii. 11–14.

communion with God raised, your way to glory facilitated, and all your sufferings sweetened; and therefore never let noble and precious thoughts of God die in your souls. Though he frown upon thee, O Christian, yet say, he is thy portion; and though he chides thee, yet say, he is thy portion; and though he corrects thee, yet say, he is thy portion; and though he deserts thee and carries it strangely towards thee, yet say, he is thy portion; and though he snatches many a mercy from thee, yet say, he is thy portion; and though he multiplies thy burdens upon thee, yet say, he is thy portion; and though he writes bitter things against thee, yet say, he is thy portion; yea, though he should pass a sentence of death upon thee, yet still say, he is thy portion. O Christians, this would still raise an heaven in your hearts, if under all dispensations you would still look upon God as your portion, and live upon God as your portion. But,

(13.) *Thirteenthly*, If God be a believer's portion, then *never let a believer be afraid to die or unwilling to die.* Let them be afraid to die that have only the world for their portion here, and hell for their portion hereafter; but let not a saint be afraid of death, that hath for his portion the Lord of life.[1] A man that hath God for his portion should rather court death than tremble at it; he should rather sweetly welcome it than turn his back upon it; for death to such an one is but the way to paradise, the way to all heavenly delights, the way to those everlasting springs of pleasure that are at God's right hand, the way to life, immortality, and glory, and the way to a clear, full, constant, and eternal fruition of God, Ps. xvi. 11. Augustine upon those words, Exod. xxxiii. 20, 21, 'Thou canst not see my face and live,' makes this short but sweet reply, 'Then, Lord, let me die, that I may see thy face.' Death is a bridge that leads to the paradise of God. All the hurt that it can do is to bring a believer to a full enjoyment of his portion.[2] When Modestus, the emperor's lieutenant, threatened to kill Basil, he answered, If that be all, I fear not; yea, your master cannot more pleasure me than in sending me unto my heavenly Father, to whom I now live, and to whom I desire to hasten. Old Alderman Jordan used to say that death would be the best friend he had in the world, and that he would willingly go forth to meet it; or rather say with holy Paul, 'O death, where is thy sting?' triumphing over it. What is a drop of vinegar put into an ocean of wine? what is it for one to have a rainy day, who is going to take possession of a kingdom? A Dutch martyr feeling the flame to come to his beard, 'Ah, said he, what a small pain is this, to be compared to the glory to come!'[3] Lactantius boasts of the braveness of that spirit that was upon the martyrs in his time. Our children and women, not to speak of men, saith he, do in silence overcome their tormentors, and the fire cannot so much as fetch a sigh from them. John Noyes took up a faggot at the fire and kissed it, saying, 'Blessed be the time that ever I was born, to come to this preferment.'[4] Never

[1] See twenty arguments in my 'String of Pearls,' to move you to be willing to die.—G.

[2] Bernard saith that he heard his brother Gerard, when just in dying, rejoice and triumphingly say, *Jam mors mihi non stimulus sed jubilus.*

[3] [Foxe.] Acts and Mon., 813. [By 'Dutch' is meant High Dutch, *i.e.* German; 'Deutsch: cf. *sub voce*, in Foxe, by Townsend, vol. iv. pp. 282–284.—G.]

[4] Clarke's 'Martyrologie,' as before, p. 493.—G.

did neckerchief become me so well as this chain, said Alice Driver, when they fastened her to the stake to be burnt.[1] Mr Bradford put off his cap, and thanked God, when the keeper's wife brought him word that he was to be burnt on the morrow.[2] Mr Taylor fetched a frisk when he was come near the place where he was to suffer.[3] Henry and John, two Augustine monks, being the first that were burnt in Germany, and Mr Rogers, the first that was burnt in Queen Mary's days, did all sing in the flames;[4] and be of good cheer, said the woman-martyr to her husband that was to suffer with her, for though we have but an ill dinner on earth, we shall sup with Christ in heaven. And what said Justin Martyr to his murderers, in behalf of himself and his fellow-martyrs? 'You may kill us, but you can never hurt us.' Ah, Christians! how can you read over these choice instances and not blush, and not be ashamed to consider what a readiness, what a forwardness, and what a noble willingness there was in these brave worthies to die and go to heaven, and to be fully possessed of their God, of their portion, whilst you shrug at the very thoughts of death, and frequently put that day far from you, and had rather, with Peter, fall upon 'building of tabernacles,' Mat. xvii. 4, than, with Paul, 'desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ,' Philip. i. 23. O Christians! how justly may that father be angry with his child that is unwilling to come home! and how justly may that husband be displeased with his wife who is unwilling to ride to him in a rainy day, or to cross the sea to enjoy his company! And is not this your case? is not this just your case, who have God for your portion, and yet are unwilling to die, that you may come to a full enjoyment of your portion? But,

(14.) *Fourteenthly, and lastly,* If God be the saint's portion, then *let all the saints give all diligence to make this clearly and fully out to their own souls, that God is their portion,* 2 Pet. i. 5–8. Next to a man's having God for his portion, it is the greatest mercy in this world for a man to know that God is his portion, and to be able groundedly to say with the church, 'The Lord is my portion,' saith my soul. Now this is a work that may be done. I suppose there is never a believer on earth but may attain unto this personal evidence and certainty of knowledge that God is his portion. Express promises speaks out such a thing as this is: Zech. xiii. 9, 'They shall call upon my name, and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people, and they shall say, It is my God;' so Ezek. xxxiv. 30, 'Thus shall they know that I the Lord their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord;' Ps. ix. 18, 'For the patient abiding of the meek shall not be forgotten for ever.' God will as soon put the faith of reliance and the faith of assurance to a blush, as he will put the faith of expectance to a blush:[5] Ps. xxii. 26, 'The meek shall eat and be satisfied, they shall praise the Lord that seek him; your heart shall live for ever.' First or last, such as seek him shall have such an answer of their prayers as shall turn their prayers into praises, and their petitions into thanksgivings: Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'The Lord will give grace and glory, and

[1] Clarke's Martyrologie, p. 504.—G.
[2] Ibid., p. 440, 454.—G. [3] Ibid., p. 442.—G. [4] Ibid., *sub nominibus*.—G.
[5] Heb. x. 37. Μικρὸν ὅσον, ὅσον. Here are two diminutives in the Greek, a little, little while, to note that God will not in the least delay his coming to his people.

no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' God will be an universal, all-sufficient, and satisfactory good to them that walk uprightly. The Lord is as full of goodness as the sun is full of light, and he will as freely, and as fully, and as impartially communicate his goodness to them that walk uprightly, as the sun doth her light both to the just and the unjust, Mat. v. 45. As under the name of no good thing will he withhold, all temporal good things are to be understood, so under the name of grace all spiritual good things are to be understood, and under the name of glory all eternal good things are to be understood. And now, if God will give all spiritual and all eternal good things to his people, how can he then but sooner or later give a clear and satisfactory evidence into his people's bosoms that he is their portion? And not only express promises, but also the graces of the Spirit and the testimony of the Spirit confirms the same thing. The language of every saving grace is this: The Lord is thy portion, O thou believing soul; and the language and testimony of the Spirit is the same: Rom. viii. 15, 'Ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father;' ver. 16, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.' Shall an instinct in nature teach young ones to know their dams, and shall not the Spirit of God, by a divine instinct, teach the saints to know God to be their God, and to be their portion also? Surely yes. Though this or that particular Christian may go to his grave without a satisfactory evidence in his own bosom that God is his portion, yet in an ordinary course, at first or last, God doth give his people some assurance that he is their portion, yea, rather than they shall always live or die without assurance of their salvation, and that he is their portion, he will work a miracle to assure them of his love.

I have both heard and read of a rare story of Mrs Honywood, a famous professor of the gospel, and one that for many years together lay under the burden of a wounded spirit, and was much troubled in mind for want of assurance that God was her portion, and that she should be saved from wrath to come. At length there came a godly minister to her, who endeavoured to settle her faith and hope in Christ; and pressing many gospel promises upon her, she took it with a kind of indignation and anger that he should offer to present any promises to her, to whom, as she thought, they did not belong; and having a Venice-glass in her hand, she held it up, and said, Speak no more to me of salvation, for I shall as surely be damned as this poor brittle glass shall be broke against the wall, throwing it with all her force to break it. But it so pleased God that, by a miraculous providence, the glass was preserved whole. The minister, beholding the miracle, took up the glass, and said unto her, 'Behold, God must work a miracle before you, before you will believe.' And for ever after that day she had very strong assurance of her salvation, and that God was her portion; and so lived and died in a sweet and comfortable sense of the love and favour of God.

Now, to provoke you to labour with all your might to attain to a clear, personal, satisfactory evidence in your own bosoms that God is your portion, do but seriously consider and lay to heart the rare and singular advantages that will redound to your souls by this means. I shall only touch upon some, by which yourselves may guess at others.

[1.] First, By this means *your hearts will come to be fixed, settled, and established.* A man's soul never comes to be fixed and settled by knowing in the general that God is the saint's portion, but by a personal evidence and certainty of knowledge that he is his particular portion. Whilst a man's particular propriety is unsettled, all is unsettled in his soul; but when a man's particular propriety is settled, when he can say, This God is my God, and the Lord is my portion, then all is settled, then all is at peace in the soul, Ps. lvii. 7, cviii. 1, cxii. 7. A man that hath God for his portion, if he do not know it, will still be like a ship at sea in the midst of a storm, tossed here and there, and now rolling on one side and then on the other, and never quiet, never lying still; but a man that hath God for his portion, and knows it, he is like a ship in a good harbour, that lies quiet and still; yea, he is like mount Zion, that cannot be removed. But,

[2.] Secondly, A clear, personal evidence that God is a man's portion, will *rid his soul of all sinful doubts.* O Christians! now your hearts are as full of doubts as hell is full of darkness. One day you doubt whether your graces are true, and another day you doubt whether your comforts are true. Now, you doubt of your saintship, and anon of your sonship, and then of your heirship. Sometimes you doubt of your communion with God, sometimes you doubt of your acquaintance with God, and sometimes you doubt of your acceptance with God. One hour you doubt of the favour of God, and the next hour you doubt of your access to God. And as it is thus with you, so it will be thus with you till you come to have some clear satisfaction in your own spirits that God is your portion. O Christians! had you but once a personal evidence in your own bosoms that God is your portion, all those doubts that are bred and fed by ignorance and unbelief, and that rob the soul of all joy, comfort, and content, and that render men babes in Christianity, and that cast reproach upon God, Christ, and the promises, &c., and that do most gratify and advantage Satan to tempt and try your souls, would vanish and disperse as the clouds do before the sun when it shines in its brightness. Till a Christian's eyes be opened to see God to be his portion, his heart will be full of doubts and perplexities. Though Mary Magdalene was very near to Christ, yet she stands sighing, mourning, and complaining, that 'they had stolen away her Lord,' John xx. 13–16. A Christian may have God for his portion, yet till he comes to see God to be his portion, he will spend his days in sighing, mourning, and complaining. O Christians! till you come to see God to be your portion, your doubts will lie down with you and rise with you, they will talk with you and walk with you, till they make your lives a very hell. It was an excellent speech of Luther, 'The whole Scripture,' saith he, 'doth principally aim at this thing, that we should not doubt, but that we should hope, trust, and believe that God is a merciful, bountiful, and gracious God to his people.' And what will bring a man's heart over to answer to this blessed aim of the Scripture? Certainly nothing below an assurance that God is his portion. It was a noble resolution of blessed Bradford, who, in one of his epistles, saith thus: 'O Lord, sometimes methinks I feel it so with me, as if there were no difference between my heart and the hearts of the wicked. My mind is as blind as theirs, and my will as stout, stubborn, and rebellious as theirs; and my affections are as much disordered as theirs,

and my conscience as much benumbed and stupefied as theirs, and my heart as hard and flinty as theirs, &c.; shall I therefore conclude that thou art not my Father? Nay, I will reason otherwise,' saith he; 'I do believe thou art my Father; I will come unto thee, that thou mayest enlighten this blind mind of mine, and bend and bow this stout and stubborn will of mine; and that thou mayest put order into these disordered affections of mine, and that thou mayest put life and quickness into this stupefied and benumbed conscience of mine, and that thou mayest put softness and tenderness into this hard and flinty heart of mine.'[1] And thus he nobly reasoned himself, and believed himself, out of all his fears and doubts. There is no such way for a man to be rid of all his fears and doubts, as to live in the sight and faith of this truth, that God is his portion.

Plutarch reports of one, who would not be resolved of his doubts, because he would not lose the pleasure in seeking for resolution, like to him that would not have his physician to quench the thirst he felt in his ague, because he would not lose the pleasure of drinking; and like those that would not be freed from their sins, because they would not lose the pleasure of sinning. But I hope better things of all those that have God for their portion, than to find them in love with their doubts, or to be unwilling to be rid of their doubts. Next to a man's going to hell, it is one of the greatest afflictions in the world for a man always to live in doubts about his going to heaven. Next to damnation, it is one of the greatest troubles that can attend a Christian, to be always exercised and perplexed with doubts about his salvation. Next to being damned, it is the hell of hells to live in continual fears of damnation. Now the only way to prevent all this, is to know that God is your portion. But,

[3.] Thirdly, A clear, personal evidence that God is a man's portion, will *exceedingly sweeten all the crosses, losses, and changes that shall attend him in this world.* Habakkuk knew that God was the God of his salvation; and that he was his portion; and therefore he rejoices: 'Though the fig-tree did not blossom, and though there were no fruit in the vines; and though the labour of the olive did fail, and the fields did yield no meat, and the flocks were cut off from the fold, and there were no herd in the stalls,' Hab. iii. 17, 18. And the same noble temper was upon those worthies in Heb. x. 34, 'They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance.' They took joyfully the spoiling of their earthly portions, being well assured in their own souls that they should enjoy an heavenly portion, an everlasting portion. And so the apostles knew that they had 'an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,' 2 Cor. v. 1; and this carried them bravely through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report, and through all weaknesses, sicknesses, distresses, wants, dangers, and death; and this made their heavy afflictions light, and their long afflictions short, and their bitter afflictions sweet, 2 Cor. iv. 16–18. This was that tree which, being cast in the waters of Marah, made them sweet, Exod. xv. 23–25; and this was that that did unsting all their crosses, losses, and reproaches, and that made them rejoice and sing under those very

[1] As before, see Index *sub nomine*.—G.

burdens and trials that would have broke the necks, backs, and hearts of others, Acts v. and xvi. When a man hath a clear personal evidence that God is his portion, then no outward changes will make any considerable change in him. Though Laban had changed Jacob's wages ten times, yet Jacob was Jacob still, Gen. xxxi. 7. Let times change, and men change, and powers change, and nations change, yet a man that hath God for his portion, and knows it, will never change his countenance, nor change his Master, nor change his service, nor change his works, nor change his ways. Under all changes he will still be *semper idem*, always the same. Many great and dreadful changes passed upon Joseph, but yet under all Joseph's bow 'abode in strength,' Gen. xlix. 23, 24. When a man knows that God is his portion, whatever changes may pass upon him, yet his bow will still abide in strength. Marcellus the pope would not change his name, according to the custom of other popes, to shew his immutability, and that he was no changeling ;[1] but how many are there in these days, who were looked upon as better men, who have changed their names, their notes, their coats, their principles, their practices, and all for worldly advantages. These changelings, that change from better to worse, and from naught to be very naught, yea, stark naught, are the worst and the naughtiest of men, and deserve to be hanged in chains ; and certainly, when the wrath of God breaks forth, these changelings shall be as stubble before it, Mal. iv. 1, Heb. x. 38. God abhors none as he doth those who run from him to serve other lords, and who gad about to change their way : Jer. ii. 36, 37, 'Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way ? thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria. Yea, thou shalt go forth from him, and thine hands upon thine head ; for the Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them.' There is nothing that will keep a man from apostasy, and from making a defection from God, his ways, his worship, his glory, &c., like a blessed persuasion that God is his portion, 2 Peter i. 5–11. But,

[4.] Fourthly, A clear personal evidence that God is a man's portion, will *exceedingly raise and advance the comfort and joy of a man's heart.* It is not merely my having of God for my portion, but it is my seeing, it is my knowing, it is my fruition of God as my portion, that is the true spring of all delight, comfort, and consolation. When a man's interest in God is clear, then all the precious promises will be full wells of salvation, and full breasts of consolation to him, but till then they will be but as dry breasts, as barren heaths, as a fruitful wilderness, and as empty wells.[2] Whilst a man is doubtful whether God be his God, it is certain that the spring of joy and comfort will run low in his soul ; whilst a man lives in fear that his title and interest is not good, how can he rejoice ? When a man's interest in God is clear, then his heaven of joy begins. A man that hath God for his portion, and knows it, cannot but live in a paradise of joy, and walk in a paradise of joy, and work in a paradise of joy, and eat in a paradise of joy, and recreate himself in a paradise of joy, and rest in a paradise of joy ; he cannot but have an heaven of joy within him, and an heaven of joy about him,

[1] Qu. Marcellus II., who was pope only twenty-three days.—G.

[2] 2 Peter i. 4 ; Isa. xii. 3, and lxvi. 2. Without delight the soul cannot live : take away all delight, and the soul dies, saith Augustine.

and an heaven of joy over him. All his looks will speak out joy within, and all his words will speak out joy within, and all his works will speak out joy within, and all his ways will speak out joy within. I remember a notable saying of one, How sweet was it to me of a sudden to be without those sweet vanities! and those things which I was afraid to lose, with joy I let go; for thou, who art the true and only sweetness, didst cast out those from me, and instead of them didst enter in thyself, who art more delightful than all pleasure, and more clear than all light.[1] When a man's interest in God is clear, his joy will be full, John xvi. 24; when a man is happy, and knows it, he cannot but rejoice; when a man hath God for his portion, and knows it, all the world cannot hinder the strong consolations of God from rising high in his soul. Why have the saints in heaven more joy and delight than the saints on earth, but because they have a clearer and a fuller knowledge of their interest and propriety in God than the others have? The knowledge of a man's propriety[2] in God is the comfort of comforts. Propriety makes every comfort a pleasurable comfort, a delightful comfort. When a man walks in a fair meadow, and can write *mine* upon it, and into a pleasant garden, and can write *mine* upon it, and into a fruitful corn-field, and can write *mine* upon it, and into a stately habitation, and can write *mine* upon it, and into a rich mine, and can write *mine* upon it, oh how doth it please him! how doth it delight him! how doth it joy and rejoice him! Of all words this word *meum* is the sweetest and the comfortablest. Ah! when a man can look upon God, and write *meum;* when he can look upon God, and say, This God is my God for ever and ever; when he can look upon God, and say, This God is my portion; when he can look upon God, and say with Thomas, 'My Lord and my God,' John xx. 28, how will all the springs of joy rise in his soul! Oh who can but joy to be owner of that God that fills heaven and earth with his fulness? who can but rejoice to have him for his portion, in having of whom he hath all things, in having of whom he can want nothing? The serious thoughts of our propriety in God will add much sweet to all our sweets, yea, it will make every bitter sweet. When a man seriously thinks, It is my God that cheers me with his presence, it is my God that supports me with his power, it is my God that guides me by his counsel, it is my God that supplies me with his goodness, and it is my God that blesses all my blessings to me; it is my God that afflicts me in love, it is my God that hath broken me in my estate and in my credit, it is my God that hath sorely visited such a child, it is my God that hath passed a sentence of death upon such a friend, it is my God that hath thus straitened me in my liberty, and it is my God that hath thus cast me down at my enemies' feet, &c., how doth these thoughts cheer up the spirit of a man, and make every bitter sweet, and every burden light unto him.

A beautiful face is at all times pleasing to the eye, but then especially when there is joy manifested in the countenance. Joy in the face puts a new beauty upon a person, and makes that which before was beautiful to be exceeding beautiful; it puts a lustre upon beauty. And so doth holy joy put a divine beauty and lustre upon all the ways of God, and upon all the people of God. And therefore, it highly con-

[1] Augustine in his Confessions.

[2] 'Property' = 'interest'.—G.

cerns all Christians, as they would have an heavenly beauty, lustre, and glory upon them, to rejoice; and that they may rejoice, it doth as highly concern them to know their interest and propriety in God. But,

[5.] Fifthly, A clear personal evidence that God is a man's portion will *very much raise him in his communion with God, and exceedingly sweeten his fellowship with God.*[1] There are no Christians on earth that have such high, such choice, such free, such full, such sweet, and such uninterrupted communion with God, as those that have a clear sight of their interest and propriety in God. The spouse, in that book of Solomon's Song, again, and again, and again sings and sounds out her propriety and interest in Christ: Cant. ii. 16, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his.' Cant. vi. 3, 'I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.' Cant. vii. 10, 'I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me.' Now, mark, how doth the sense of this her propriety in Christ work? Why, it works very highly, very strongly, very inflamingly, very affectionately: Cant. i. 2–4, 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine: because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth, and therefore do the virgins love thee. Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers; we will be glad and rejoice in thee; we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee.' Ver. 13, 'A bundle of myrrh is my beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.' Chap. ii. 3–6, 'As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my taste. He brought me to the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love. Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.' And chap. vii. 5, 'The king is held in the galleries.' The spouse had a clear sight and a deep sense of her interest and propriety in Christ; and oh, how high, how close, how full, how sweet, is she in her communion and fellowship with Christ! It is the sight and sense of propriety and interest that heightens and sweetens that communion that is between husband and wife, father and child, brother and sister, and friend and friend; so it is the sight and sense of a man's propriety and interest in God that heightens and sweetens his communion and fellowship with God. A clear sight of a man's interest and propriety in God will exceedingly sweeten every thought of God, and every appearance of God, and every taste of God, and every smile of God, and every communication of God, and every ordinance of God, and every work of God, and every way of God; yea, it will sweeten every rod that is in the hand of God, and every wrinkle that is in face of God, Ps. cxxxix. 17,18. A man that sees his interest in God, will hang upon him, and trust in him, though he should write never such bitter things against him, and though he should deal never so severely with him, yea, though he should slay him, as you may see in Job xiii. 15. He hit it who said, A man whose soul is conversant with God shall find more pleasure in the desert and in death, than in the palace of a prince. Urbanus

[1] 1 John i. 1–4; 2 Cor. 13, 14. Man's *summum bonum* stands in his communion with God, as Scripture and experience evidences, Ps. cxliv. 15. My God and I am good company, said famous Dr Sibbes.

Regius, having one day's converse with Luther, said,[1] It was one of the sweetest days that ever he had in all his life. But if one day's communion with Luther was so sweet, oh how sweet must one day's communion with God be. And therefore, as ever you would have high, and full, and sweet communion with God, keep up a clear sight, a blessed sense of your interest and propriety in God. But,

[6.] Sixthly, A clear personal evidence that God is a man's portion, is *a man's all in all.* O sirs! this is the life of your lives, and the life of your prayers, and the life of your praises, and the life of your confidences, and the life of your mercies, and the life of your comforts, and the life of your hopes, &c. A clear sight of your propriety in God is the very life of promises, the life of ordinances, the life of providences, the life of experiences, and the life of your gracious evidences. It is a pearl of price; it is your paradise; it is manna in a wilderness, it is water out of a rock, it is a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night; it is Jacob's ladder; it is a salve for every sore, it is physic for every disease, it is a remedy against every malady; it is an anchor at sea, and a shield on shore; it is a star to guide you, a staff to support you, a sword to defend you, a pavilion to hide you, a fire to warm you, a banquet to refresh you, a city of refuge to secure you, and a cordial to cheer you; and what would you have more? But,

[7.] Seventhly, and lastly, A clear personal evidence that God is a man's portion will exceedingly *sweeten the thoughts of death, and all the approaches of death, and all the warnings and forerunners of death unto him.* It will make a man look upon his last day as his best day, Eccles. vii. 1; it will make a man look upon the king of terrors as the king of desires, Job xviii. 14; it will make a man laugh at the shaking of the spear, at the sounding of the trumpet, at the confused noise of the battle, at garments rolled in blood, at the sighs and groans of the wounded, and at the heaps of the slain. It was the martyrs' clear sight of their interest and propriety in God that made them compliment with lions, and dare their persecutors, and to kiss the stake, and to sing and clap their hands in the midst of the flames, and to tread upon hot burning coals as upon beds of roses, and divinely to triumph over their tormentors. It was this that made the primitive Christians ambitious of martyrdom, and that made them willingly and cheerfully lay down their lives, that they might, Elijah-like, mount to heaven in fiery chariots. A man that sees his propriety in God, knows that death shall be the funeral of all his sins, sorrows, afflictions, temptations, desertions, oppositions, vexations, oppressions, and persecutions; and he knows that death shall be the resurrection of his hopes, joys, delights, comforts, and contentments, and that it shall bring him to a more clear, full, perfect, and constant enjoyment of God: and this makes him sweetly and triumphantly to sing it out, O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?' 1 Cor. xv. 35–37. And oh that these seven considerations might prevail with all your souls to be restless, till you have in your own bosoms clear and full satisfaction that God is your portion. Now this last inference leads me by the hand to an use of trial and examination. O sirs! if God be the saint's

[1] A dam in vit. Regii, p. 78.

portion, the believer's portion, how highly doth it concern every one that looks upon himself as a saint or as a believer, to search, try, and examine whether God be his portion or no?

Quest. But you will say, How shall we know whether God be our portion or no? Oh! were all the world a lump of gold, and in our hands to dispose of, we would give it to know that God is our portion! Oh! the knowledge of this would be as life from the dead; it would create an heaven in our hearts on this side heaven; it would presently put us into a paradise of pleasure and delight; but still the question is, How shall we know it? It is an easy thing to say that God is our portion; but how shall we come infallibly to know that God is our portion?

Now, to give clear and full satisfaction to this great and weighty question, I shall give in these following answers, by which you may certainly and undoubtedly know, whether God be your portion or no:

[1.] First, If God be thy portion, then *thou hast very sweet, precious, high, and honourable thoughts of God;* then thy thoughts will still be running out after God, and thy meditations of him will be sweet.[1] A man that hath God for his portion, is always best when his thoughts and meditations are running out most after God: Ps. civ. 34, 'My meditations of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord;' Ps. lxiii. 5, 6, 'My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips; when I remember thee upon my bed (or beds, as the Hebrew hath it; David never bedded at home nor abroad, here nor there, but still his thoughts were running out to God), and meditate on thee in the night watches;' Ps. cxxxix. 17, 18, 'How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! if I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.' The psalmist had very frequent, high, precious, and honourable thoughts of God; he valued nothing at so high a rate as sweet and noble thoughts of God, and of his power, wisdom, goodness, faithfulness, and graciousness, &c. David had such precious thoughts of God, and such great and glorious thoughts of God, and such infinite and innumerable thoughts of God, that he was as well able to number the sands of the sea, as he was able to number them up: 'And when I awake I was still with thee.' He was still a-contemplating upon God; he did fall asleep with precious thoughts of God, and he did awake with precious thoughts of God; he did rise up with precious thoughts of God, and he did lie down with precious thoughts of God; he did go forth with precious thoughts of God, and he did return home with precious thoughts of God. Take a Christian when he is himself, when he is neither under sad desertions, nor black temptations, nor great afflictions, and he can as soon forget his own and his father's house, the wife of his bosom, the fruit of his loins, yea, he can as soon forget to eat his bread, as he can forget his God.

When Alexander the Great had overthrown Darius, king of Persia, he took among the spoils a most rich cabinet, full of the choicest jewels that were in all the world; upon which there rose a dispute before him, to what use he should put the cabinet; and every one having spent his

[1] Lord, saith Austin, the more I meditate on thee, the sweeter thou art unto me. Jerome calls meditation his paradise, and Theophylact calls it the very gate and portal by which we enter into glory. To think is to live, saith Cicero.

judgment according to his fancy, the king himself concluded, that he would keep that cabinet, to be a treasury to lay up the books of Homer in, which were his greatest joy and delight.[1] A sanctified memory is a rich cabinet full of the choicest thoughts of God;[2] it is that rich treasury wherein a Christian is still a-laying up more and more precious thoughts of God, and more and more high and holy thoughts of God, and more and more honourable and noble thoughts of God, and more and more awful and reverent thoughts of God, and more and more sweet and comfortable thoughts of God, and more and more tender and compassionate thoughts of God, &c. Take a Christian in his ordinary course, and you shall find that wherever he is, his thoughts are running out after God; and about whatever he is, his thoughts are still a-running out after God; and into what company soever he is cast, whether they are good or bad, yet still his thoughts are running out after God, &c.

Look, as an earthly-minded man hath his thoughts and meditations still exercised ard taken up with the world, as you may see in Haman, whose heart and thoughts were taken up with his honours, perferments, riches, wife, children, and friends, &c.:[3] Esther v. 10–12, 'Nevertheless Haman refrained himself, and when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife. And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to-morrow am I invited unto her also with the king.' And the same spirit you may see working in those that had made gold their god, in that Ps. xlix. 10, 11, 'For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others. Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations: they call their lands after their own names.' The Hebrew runneth thus: 'Their inwards are their houses for ever,' as if their houses were got within them. Not only the thoughts, but the very inmost thoughts, the most retired thoughts and recesses of worldlings' souls, are taken up about earthly things; and though they care not whether their names are written in heaven or no, yet they do all they can to propagate and immortalise their names on earth. And the rich fool was one in spirit with these the psalmist speaks of, as you may see in that Luke xii. 16, 22, 'And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. And he thought within himself (the Greek word διελογίζετο is a marvellous proper word for the purpose; it signifies to talk with a man's self, or to reason with a man's self. This foolish worldling was much in talking to himself, and in reasoning with himself about his goods and barns, &c., as the usual

[1] Plutarch: a commonplace of Alexander's 'Lives.'—G.

[2] Ps. xxv. 1; Ps. lxxxvi. 4: Ps. cxlii. 8; Basil calls meditation on [God] the treasury, where all graces are locked up.

[3] The thoughts and hearts of the people of Constantinople were so extremely set upon the world, and running out after the world, that they were buying and selling in their shops even three days after the Turks were within the walls of their city; and that was the reason that the streets run down with their blood, and the blood of their wives and children. [Knolle's Turkish History, as before.—G.

manner of men is that are of a worldly spirit), saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' Among all his worldly thoughts, there is not one thought of God, of Christ, of grace, of heaven, of holiness, of eternity, to be found. His thoughts were so taken up with his bags, and his barns, and his buildings, and his ease, and his belly, that he had no time to think of providing for another world; and therefore God quickly despatches him out of this world, and throws him down from the highest pinnacle of prosperity and worldly glory into the greatest gulf of wrath and misery, ver. 20. And this foolish worldling puts me in mind of another, who, being offered an horse by his fellow upon condition that he would but say the Lord's prayer, and think upon nothing but God, which proffer being accepted, he began: 'Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.' But I must have the bridle too, said he. No, nor the horse neither, said the other; for thou hast lost both already.

When worldlings should most think of God, and be most struck with the dread and majesty of God, and be most afflicted and taken up with the glory of God, yet then their thoughts and hearts will be a-gadding and a-running after the world, as you may see in Ezekiel's hearers; Ezek. xxxiii. 30–32, and in Paul's, Philip. iii. 18, 19. When queen Mary was dying, she said that if they did but open her when she was dead, they should find Calais lying at her heart. Ah! how often doth stinking lusts and rotten towns, and moth-eaten bags, and other trifling vanities, lie near those hearts where God, and Christ, and the Spirit, and grace, and ordinances, and saints, and heaven should lie! Look, as the thoughts of the men of the world do mainly run out after the world, after their earthly portions, so the thoughts of those that have God for their portion do mainly run out after God, and they are never so well as when they are most a-thinking and a-musing on God. But,

[2.] Secondly, If God be thy portion, then *in all thy straits, trials, troubles, and wants, thou wilt run to thy God, thou wilt fly to the Lord, as to thy only city of refuge*:[1] 1 Sam. xxx. 6, 'And David was greatly distressed, for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved (or bitter) every man for his sons, and for his daughters; but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.' When a shower of stones were coming about David's ears, he runs and shelters himself under the wings of his God. Though David was an exile in an heathenish country, though Ziklag, the place of his habitation, was burnt, though he had neither house nor home to flee to, though his wives were in his enemies' hands, and though his friends and followers were desperately incensed, enraged, exasperated, and provoked against him, and took counsel together about stoning of him, looking upon him as the author of all their crosses, losses, calamities, and miseries; yet now he comforts and encourages himself in the Lord his God: Ps. cxlii. 4, 'I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; but no man cared for my soul.' But what

[1] Ps. xxviii. 1; xxxi. 2, 3; lxi. 2; lxii. 2, 6, 7; xcii. 15; xciv. 22; xxxii. 1, 2.

doth the psalmist do in this case? Doth he despair or despond? No. Doth he cast away his hope and confidence in God? No. Why, what doth he do then? Why, when all outward comforts fail him, he runs to God as to his last refuge: ver. 5, 6, 'I cried unto thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living. Attend unto my cry, for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I.' He doth not run in his straits from God to the creatures, for that had been to run from the fountain of living waters to broken cisterns, Jer. ii. 12, 13, John vi. 68, Isa. xxxiii. 16, from the light of the sun to the light of a farthing candle, and from the Rock of ages to a leaf driven about with the wind, and from paradise into an howling wilderness, &c. But whither doth he run then? Why, he runs to God; he knew that God was his light, his life, his love, his peace, his joy, his strength, his shelter, his safety, his security, his crown, his glory, and therefore he runs to his God. And, indeed, in times of danger, whither should the child run to shelter himself but to his father? and whither should the wife run but to her husband? and the servant but to his master? and the soldier but to his stronghold? and a Christian but to his God? Prov. xviii. 10, 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe.' Sometimes by *the name of the Lord* we are to understand God himself, but most commonly God's attributes are called his name, because by them he is known, as a man is by his name; and here by the name of the Lord we are to understand the power of the Lord, for by that God is known, as men are known by their names. Now God himself is a strong tower, and the power of God is a strong tower, yea, it is a tower as high as heaven, and as strong as strength itself; it is a tower so deep no pioneer can undermine it, so thick no cannon can pierce it, so high no ladder can scale it, so strong that no enemy can assault it or ever be able to stand before it, and so well furnished and provided for all purposes and intents, that all the powers of darkness can never distress it, or in the least straiten it. Now to this impregnable and inexpugnable tower the righteous in all their distresses and dangers run. All creatures run to their refuges when they are hunted and pursued, and so do righteous souls to theirs. But what doth the righteous man gain by running to his strong tower? Why, he gains safety; he is safe, saith the text, or rather according to the Hebrew נִשְׂגָּב, *exaltatur*,[1] he is exalted, he is set aloft, he is a soul out of gunshot, he is a soul out of all hazard and danger, he is safe in everlasting arms, he is safe in his strong tower of defence, he can easily overlook all hazards, yea, he can look upon the greatest dangers with an holy neglect. And when the burning fiery furnace was heated seven times hotter than at first, whither doth Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego run? Why, they run to God: Dan. iii. 16–18, 'Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set

[1] The Hebrew word is from *Sagab*, that signifies to exalt, or to set aloft.

up.' And so Moses in that Ps. xc. 1, 'Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations;' or as the Hebrew hath it, thou hast been our refuge-place in generation and generation. By this Hebraism, generation and generation, the prophet sets forth all generations, to shew that there hath been no generation wherein God hath not been the refuge of his people. God was a refuge to his people before the flood, and he hath been a refuge since the flood, and he will be a refuge to his people, whilst he hath a people in the world. All the time that Moses and the people of Israel were a-travelling up and down in that terrible howling wilderness, wherein they were compassed about with dreadful dangers on all hands, God was a refuge and a dwelling-place unto them. In all their troubles and travels for four hundred years together, God was a shelter, a refuge, and an house of defence unto them. Every man's house is his strong castle, and thither he retreats when dangers come; and thus did the people of God in the text. When dangers threatened them, they still run to their God, they still made their retreat to the Holy One of Israel. A man that hath God for his portion, when he is at worst can never be houseless nor harbourless. As long as God lives, he can never want an house, a mansion-house to hide his head in. All the powers on earth and all the powers of hell can never unhouse, nor never unharbour, nor never unshelter that man that hath God for his portion. It was a witty saying of that learned man Picus Mirandula, 'God created the earth for beasts to inhabit, the sea for fishes, the air for fowls, and heaven for angels and stars, so that man hath no place to dwell and abide in but God alone.' And certainly he that by faith dwells in God, dwells in the best, the noblest, the safest, and the strongest house that ever was dwelt in. And so Ps. xci. 1, 2, 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge, and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.' In this whole psalm the safety of a saint is set forth to the life; to abide under the shadow of the Almighty, notes the defence and protection of God. Those words, 'shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty,' are a metaphor taken from a bird or an hen, that hides her young ones under her wings, and so secures them from the kite, or any other birds of prey. God never wants a wing to hide his children under; and look, as little chickens run under the wings of the hen when danger is near, so the people of God do commonly run under the wings of God when danger is near. And certainly, that Christian may well bid defiance to all dangers, and easily and sweetly sing away all cares and fears, who can by faith shelter himself and lodge himself under the shadow of Shaddai.

Look, as the worldling in all his straits, troubles, trials, dangers, and wants, still runs to his bags, to his earthly portion for succour, for comfort, for support, for relief, for shelter, for protection,[1] Prov. xviii. 11; Mat. xix. 24; 1 Tim. vi. 17. So a Christian in all his troubles, trials, and distresses, still runs to his God for shelter, comfort, and support: Ps. xxxi. 1–3, 'In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness. Bow down thine ear to

[1] I have read of a wretched worldling, who being sick to death, called for one of his bags of gold, and laid it to his heart, and then cried out, Oh it will not do, it will not do; and then called for another, and still cried out, Oh it will not do, it will not do.

me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me. For thou art my rock and my fortress: therefore, for thy name's sake, lead me, and guide me.' Ps. lxi. 2, 3, 'From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.' Ps. xciv. 21, 22, 'They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent. But the Lord is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge.' Ps. lvii. 2, 'I will cry unto God most High; unto God that performeth all things for me.' Isa. xxv. 9, 'And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.' Micah vii. 7, 'Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear.' Thus you see that the saints in all their straits and trials do still run to God. They know that that God that is their portion is an all-sufficient God, and that he is a sun and a shield to them that walk uprightly; and therefore they delight to be still a running under his shadow. A man that hath God for his portion, may truly say in his greatest distresses and troubles, Well, though I have no riches to fly to, nor no friends to shelter me, nor no relations to stand by me, nor no visible power on earth to protect me, yet I have a God for my portion that is always willing to supply me, and able to secure me: Ps. xviii. 1, 2, 'I will love thee, O Lord, my strength,' or as the Hebrew hath it, 'I will dearly love the Lord,' or 'I will love him with inmost bowels of affections,' as a tender-hearted mother loves her dearest babe with the inmost bowels of affections. 'The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.' In this verse you have nine several expressions to discover what an all-sufficient refuge God is to his people in their greatest distresses. When a Christian is at worst, yet he hath bread celestial, bread to eat that the world knows not of. The grand policy of a Christian to secure himself against all dangers is to run to God. But,

[3.] Thirdly, If God be thy portion, then thou *wilt hold fast thy portion, and rather part with anything than part with thy portion.* Naboth would not upon any terms part with his inheritance; he would rather let all go, yea, his very life go, than let his inheritance go, his portion go: 1 Kings xxi. 3, 'And Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee;' or, as the Hebrew hath it, This be abomination to me from the Lord; that is, The Lord keep me from this as from an abominable thing. To alter or alienate the property of inheritances was expressly forbidden by God in his law, Lev. xxv. 23; Num. xxxvi. 7; Ezek. xlvi. 18; and therefore Naboth looks upon Ahab's offer and motion as a detestable and an abominable thing, and resolves to hold fast his inheritance, whatever it cost him. So a Christian will hold fast his God, whatever comes on it; he will let anything go, rather than let his God go or his Christ go: Cant. iii. 4, 'It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth; I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of

her that conceived me.'[1] The Hebrew word that is here rendered *held* is from *achaz*, which signifies to hold, as a man would hold his possession, his inheritance. The word signifies to hold with both hands, to hold with all one's might and with all one's strength; and thus the spouse held the Lord Jesus; she held him with both hands; she held him with all her might and with all her strength; she held him with a holy violence, with an holy force; she held him as a man would hold his prisoner that had a mind to escape, or as a man would hold his sword or buckler when his life is in danger. So Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 26, 'And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.' When Jacob was all alone, and in a dark night, and upon one leg, and when his joints were out of joint, and he very much over-matched, yet then he holds God fast, he wrestles and weeps, and weeps and wrestles, he tugs and sweats, and sweats and tugs, and will not let go his hold, till, like a prince, he had prevailed with God, Hosea xii. 4. Ruth, you know, was so glued to her mother Naomi, that no arguments could prevail with her to leave her mother. She was fully resolved in this, that whither her mother went she would go, and where her mother lodged she would lodge, and that her mother's people should be her people, and her mother's God her God, and that where her mother died there she would die, and there would she be buried, Ruth i. 14–19. So a man that hath God for his portion is so glued to his God, that nothing can take him off from following of God and from cleaving to God. When David was in his wilderness condition, yet then his soul followed hard after God, then his soul stuck close to God: Ps. lxiii. 1, 2, 'O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.' Ver. 8, 'My soul followeth hard after thee;' or, as the words may be read, 'My soul cleaveth after thee.' David's enemies did not follow harder after him than he followed hard after God. The wife in a man's bosom could not cleave so close to him as David's soul did cleave close to God when he was in a wilderness estate, when he was in an afflicted condition. It is nothing to follow God in a paradise, but it is rare to follow God in a wilderness; it is nothing to follow God when the way is strewed with rose-buds, but it is the glory of a Christian to follow God when the way is strewed with thorns and briars; it is nothing to follow God in a crowd, or with the crowd, but it is the excellency of a Christian to follow God in a wilderness, where few or none follows after him; it is nothing to follow God in the midst of all encouragements, but it is wonderful to follow God in the midst of all discouragements. Oh the integrity! oh the ingenuity! oh the strong intention! oh the deep affection! oh the noble resolution, of that Christian that hangs upon God in a wilderness, and that cleaves to God in a wilderness, and that follows hard after God in a wilderness! Look, as Shechem's soul did cleave to Dinah, and as Jacob's soul did cleave to Rachel, and as Jonathan's soul did cleave to David in the very face of all hazards, dangers, difficulties, troubles, trials, and distresses, so the very soul of a man that hath God for his portion will cleave to God in the very face of all hazards, dangers,

[1] The motto of a Christian, whilst he is in the wilderness of this world, is self-diffidence and Christ-dependence, Cant. viii. 5.

difficulties, troubles, trials, and distresses that he meets withal, Ps. xliv. 8–23. It is neither the frowns of men, nor the reproaches of men, nor the scorns of men, nor the contempts of men, nor the oppositions of men, nor the treacheries of men, nor the combinations of men, that will work him to let go his hold of God. A man that hath God for his portion knows that, whilst he holds his God, he holds his life; and that, whilst he holds his God, he holds his comfort, his crown, his heaven, his all; and therefore he will rather let all go, than let his God go. And so much the several *leave nots* that are scattered up and down in the blessed Scripture doth clearly evidence; as that in 1 Kings viii. 57, 'The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us;' and that Ps. xxvii. 9, 'Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger; thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.' And so Ps. cxix. 121, 'I have done judgment and justice; leave me not to mine oppressors.' And so Ps. cxli. 8, 'But mine eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord: in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute,' or leave not my soul naked, as the Hebrew word signifies. And so in that Jer. xiv. 9, 'Why shouldest thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not.' Now in these five scriptures you have five *leave us nots*, and what do they import? Certainly nothing less than a marvellous unwillingness in the people of God to part with God, or to let go their hold of God.

I have read of Cynægirus,[1] an Athenian captain, who, in the Persian wars, pursuing his enemy's ship, which was laden with the rich spoils of his country, and ready to set sail, how he first held it with his right hand till that was cut off, and then with his left hand till that was cut off, and then with his stumps till his arms were cut off, and then he held it with his teeth till his head was cut off; as long as he had any life or strength left in him, he would not let go his hold. So a man that hath God for his portion will rather die at the foot of God than he will let go his hold of God: Job xiii. 15, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.' But,

[4.] Fourthly, If God be thy portion, then *thou livest upon God as upon thy portion.* Look, as the men of the world do live upon their earthly portions, so a man that hath God for his portion lives upon his God, as you may plainly see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together.[2] Look, how the poor man lives upon his labours, the covetous man upon his bags, the ambitious man upon his honours, the voluptuous man upon his pleasures, &c., so doth a Christian live upon his God. In all his duties he lives upon God, and in all his mercies he lives upon God, and in all his wants he lives upon God, and in all his straits and trials he lives upon God, and in all his contentments and enjoyments he still lives upon God for his justification: Rom. viii. 33, 'It is God that justifieth,' and he still lives upon God for the perfecting of his sanctification; Philip. i. 6, 'Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of

[1] Rather Cynægeirus. Brooks here translates Justin ii. 9.—G.

[2] 1 Sam. xxx. 6; Hab. iii. 17, 18; Ps. lxxiii. 26; Rom. xiv. 7, 8; Gal. ii. 20; Phil. i. 21.

Jesus Christ;' and he lives upon God for the maintaining and increasing of his consolation, 2 Cor. i. 3–5. When he is under the frowns of the world, then he lives upon the smiles of God; when he is under the hatred of the world, then he lives upon the loves of God; and when he is under the reproaches of the world, then he lives upon his credit with God; when he is under the threatenings of the world, then he lives upon the protection of God; and when he is under the designs and plottings of the world, then he lives upon the wisdom and counsel of God; when he is under the slightings and neglects of the world, then he lives upon the care of God; and when he is under the crosses and losses of the world, then he lives upon the fulness and goodness of God, &c. Alexander told his soldiers, I wake that ye may sleep. Most sure I am, that he that is the saint's portion never slumbers nor sleeps, Ps. cxxi. 3, 4. God is always watchful and wakeful to do his people good; he never wants skill or will to help them, he never wants a purse, a hand, or a heart to supply them, &c.

O sirs! Every man singles out something to live upon. Some single out one thing, some another. Saith the wife, I must live upon my husband; says the child, I must live upon my father; says the servant, I must live upon my master; says the old, We must live upon the labours of the young; says the poor, We must live upon the charity of the rich; and why then shall not a Christian live upon his God? A Christian that hath God for his portion may say, when he is at worst, Well, though I have not this nor that nor the other outward comfort to live upon, yet I have the power of a God to live on, and I have the providence of a God to live on, and I have the promise of a God to live on, and I have the oath of a God to live on, and I have the love of a God to live on, and I have the bounty of a God to live on, and I have the fulness of a God to live on, and I have the care of a God to live on; and what can I desire more? John of Alexandria, surnamed the Almoner, did use yearly to make even his revenues, and when he had distributed all to the poor, he thanked God that he had now nothing left him to live upon but his Lord and Master Jesus Christ.[1] When all is gone, yet a Christian hath his God to live upon as his portion, and that is enough to answer to all other things, and to make up the want of all other things. Look, as he hath nothing that hath not God for his portion, so he wants nothing that hath God for his portion. It was a weighty saying of one [Cajetan], 'The spiritual good of a man consists in this, that a man hath friendship with God, and consequently that he lives for him, to him, with him, in him; that he lives for him by consent, to him by conversation, with him by cohabitation, and in him by contentation. Old godly Similes said, that he had been in the world sixty years, but had lived but seven, counting his life not from his first birth, but from his new birth. A man lives no longer than he lives upon God as his portion: when a man begins to live upon God as his portion, then he begins to live indeed, and not till then. But,

[5.] Fifthly, If God be thy portion, then *he carries thy heart from all other things*, Ps. xlii. 12. The portion always carries the heart with it.[2] Mat. vi. 20, 21, 'But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where

[1] Surius *de vitis. SS.*

[2] Bernard well observes, that a wise man's heart is with the Lord.

neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also.' Ps. lxiii. 1, 'O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee' (or, I will diligently seek thee, as merchants do precious stones that are of greatest value), 'my soul thirsteth for thee.' He doth not say, my soul thirsteth for water, but my soul thirsteth for thee; nor he doth not say, my soul thirsteth for the blood of my enemies, but my soul thirsteth for thee; nor he doth not say, my soul thirsteth for deliverance out of this dry and barren wilderness, but my soul thirsteth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; nor he doth not say, my soul thirsteth for a crown, a kingdom, but my soul thirsteth for thee, 'my flesh longeth for thee.' These words are a notable metaphor, taken from women with child, to note his earnest, ardent, and strong affections towards God. And so Ps. lxxxiv. 2, 'My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.' The word that is here rendered *crieth*, is from *Ranan*, that signifies to shout, shrill, or cry out, as soldiers do at the beginning of a battle, when they cry out, Fall on, fall on, fall on, or when they cry out after a victory, Victory, victory, victory! The Hebrew word notes a strong cry, or to cry as a child cries when it is sadly hungry, for now every whit of the child cries, hands cry, and face cries, and feet cries; and so Ps. cxix. 20, 'My soul breaketh for the longings it hath unto thy judgments at all times.' Look, as the stone will still be rolling towards its centre, its place, though it break itself into a thousand pieces; so a soul that hath God for his portion cannot rest till he comes to God, till he comes to his centre. It is very observable, that when the God of glory appeared to Abraham, he made nothing of leaving his father's house, his kindred, and his country, Acts vii. 1–5, Gen. xii. 1. A glimpse of that glory works him to give up all easily, readily, and quietly. A man that can look upon the God of glory to be his portion, he cannot but look upon the greatest, the nearest, and the dearest enjoyments of the world, as nothing; he cannot but look upon honour as a bubble, and worldly pomp as a fancy, and great men as a lie, and poor men as vanity. He cannot but look upon his nearest and his dearest relations, his highest and his noblest friends, his choicest and his sweetest comforts, but as a dream and a shadow that soon vanisheth away.

It is observable in the courts of kings and princes, that children and the ruder sort of people are much taken with pictures and rich shows, and feed their fancies with the sight of rich hangings and fine gay things; whereas such as are great favourites at court, pass by all those things as things that are below them, and as things that are not worthy of their notice, who have business with the king, and who have the eye, the ear, the hand, and the heart of the king to take pleasure and delight in; so most men admire the poor low things of the world, and are much taken with them as things that have a great deal of worth and excellency in them; but a man that hath God for his portion, the King of kings for his portion, and all that he hath, he passeth by all the gay and gallant things of the world, as things below him, as things not worthy of him. His business is with his God, and his thoughts, his heart, and affections are taken up with his God.

Naturalists tell us that the loadstone will not draw in the presence of

the diamond. O sirs! whilst a man can eye God as his portion, all the pride, pomp, bravery, glory, and gallantry in the world will never be able to draw him from God, Heb. xi. 24–27, 35. It is reported that when the tyrant Trajan[1] commanded Ignatius to be ripped up and unbowelled, they found *Jesus Christ* written upon his heart in characters of gold. Here was an heart worth gold indeed; Christ carried away his heart from all other things. So if God be thy portion, he will certainly carry thy heart away from all earthly things. Look, as earthly portions carry away worldly hearts from God, Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32; Luke xii. 16–21; so when God once comes to be a man's portion, he carries his heart away from the world, the flesh, and the devil. All the world cannot keep a man's interest and his heart asunder. If a man make sin his interest, all the world cannot keep sin and his heart asunder. If a man make the world his interest, all the power on earth cannot keep the world and his heart asunder. And so if a man make God his interest, all the world cannot keep God and his heart asunder: no sword, no prison, no racks, no flames can keep a man's interest and his heart asunder. A man's heart will be working towards his interest, even through the very fire, as you may see in the three children, Dan. iii. 17, 18. Look, as the needle's point in the seaman's compass never stands still, but quivers and shakes till it come right against the north pole; and as the wise men of the east never stood still till they were right against the star which appeared to them; and as the star itself never stood still till it came right against that other star, which shined more brightly in the manger than the sun did in the firmament; and as Noah's dove could find no rest for the sole of her foot all the while she was fluttering over the flood, till she returned to the ark with an olive branch in her mouth: so the heart of a Christian that hath God for his portion can never rest, can never be at quiet, but in God. But,

[6.] Sixthly, If God be thy portion, then *thou wilt own thy God, and stand up courageously and resolutely for thy God.*[2] Every man will own his portion, and stand up stoutly and resolutely for his portion, and so will every Christian do for his God: Ps. cxix. 46, 'I will speak of thy testimonies before kings, and will not be ashamed.' David was resolved upon a noble and resolute owning of God and his testimonies before the greatest and the highest of men; and this he would do and not blush, this he would do and not be ashamed, this he would do and not be daunted.[3] It was neither the majesty or authority of princes, it was neither the power or dread of princes, that could hinder David from giving in his testimony on God's side, or on truth's side. Joshua xxiv. 18, 'We will serve the Lord, for he is our God:' vers. 21, 22, 'And the people said unto Joshua, Nay, but we will serve the Lord; and Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves, that ye have chosen you the Lord to serve him; and they said, We are witnesses.' Ver. 24, 'And the people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.' They had chosen God to be their God, as God had chosen them to be his peculiar people above

[1] Spelled 'Tragine.'—G. [2] Histories abound with instances of this nature.

[3] A man of no resolution, or of a weak resolution, will be won with a nut, and lost with an apple; but a man of a noble resolution will own God in the face of the greatest majesty on earth.

all the nations of the earth; and therefore, notwithstanding all that Joshua had objected, they were fully resolved to own the Lord, and to cleave to the Lord, and to obey the Lord, and wholly to devote themselves to the service of the Lord, Having taken the Lord to be their God, they were firmly resolved to own the Lord really, and to own him fully, and to own him primarily, and to own him only, and to own him everlastingly. And so Deut. xxvi. 17, 'Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice.' They had avouched God to be their God, and therefore they were resolved upon all those holy ways and means whereby they might evidence to the world their owning of God to be their God. And so in that 2 Chron. xxx. 8, 'They yield themselves unto the Lord,' or, as the Hebrew hath it, 'They give the hand unto the Lord.' You know when men make covenants or agreements to own one another, or to stand by one another, they commonly strike hands, or take one another by the hand. Certainly all those that have the Lord for their portion, have given their hands to the Lord, that they will own him, and stand by him, and cleave to him, as Jonathan did to David, or as Ruth did to Naomi. How stoutly and courageously did the three children own the Lord, and stand by the Lord in the face of the fiery furnace, Dan. iii. 17, 18; and Daniel will, upon choice, be rather cast into the den of lions than that the honour of God should in the least be clouded, or his glory darkened by any neglects or omissions of his, chap. vi. And so did all those worthies, 'of whom this world was not worthy,' Heb. xi. 34. Oh, how did they own God, and stand up for God, notwithstanding the edge of the sword, the violence of fire, the cruel mockings and scourgings, the bonds and imprisonments, the stoning and sawing asunder, the temptings and wanderings about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, and all other trials and torments that did attend them. Basil affirms that the primitive Christians did so courageously and resolutely own God, and stand up for God in the face of the most dreadful sufferings, that many of the heathens, seeing their heroic zeal, courage, magnanimity, and constancy, turned Christians. Domitian raised the second persecution against the Christians because they would not give the title of Lord to any but Christ, nor worship any but God alone. Among the many thousand instances that might be given, let me only give you a few of a later date, whereby you may see how courageously and resolutely the saints have stood up for God, and owned God, in the face of the greatest dangers that hath attended them.

Luther owned God and stood up resolutely for God against the world.[1] And when the emperor sent for him to Worms, and his friends dissuaded him from going, as sometimes Paul's did him, Go, said he, I will surely go since I am sent for in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; yea, though I knew that there were as many devils in Worms to resist me as there be tiles to cover the houses, yet I would go: and when he and his associates were threatened with many dangers from opposers on all hands, he lets fall this heroic and magnanimous speech, 'Come, let us sing the six-and-fortieth Psalm, and then let them do their worst.' And indeed it was a brave courageous speech of the same author, who,

[1] [Foxe] Acts et Mon. 776. [*Sub Worms* in Foxe, by Townsend.—G.]

when one demanded where he would be when the emperor should, with all his forces, fall upon the elector of Saxony, who was the chief protector of the Protestants, answered, *Aut in cœlo aut sub cœlo*, either in heaven or under heaven.

William Flower, the martyr, said that the heavens should as soon fall as he would forsake his profession, or budge in the least degree from it.[1]

Apollonius, as Philostratus reports, being asked, if he did not tremble at the sight of the tyrant, made this answer, God, which hath given him a terrible countenance, hath given also unto me an undaunted heart.

When the persecutors by their dreadful threatenings did labour to terrify one of the martyrs, he replied, that there was nothing of things visible, nor nothing of things invisible, that he was afraid of. I will, saith he, stand to my profession of the name of Christ, and 'contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.'

When Bishop Gardiner asked Rowland Taylor if he did not know him, &c., he answered, Yea, I know you, and all your greatness, yet you are but a mortal man; and if I should be afraid of your lordly looks, why fear you not God, the Lord of us all?[1]

The executioner kindling the fire behind Jerome of Prague, he bade him kindle it before his face, for, said he, if I had been afraid of it, I had not come to this place, having had so many opportunities offered me to escape it; and at the giving up of the ghost, he said, This soul of mine in flames of fire, O Christ, I offer thee.[1]

The German knight, in his apologetical letter for Luther against the pontifical clergy, saith, I will go through what I have undertaken against you, and will stir up men to seek their freedom; I neither care nor fear what may befall me, being prepared for either event, either to ruin you, to the great benefit of my country, or else to fall with a good conscience.

When Dionysius was given up to the executioner to be beheaded, he remained resolute, courageous, and constant, saying, 'Come life, come death, I will worship none but the God of heaven and earth.'[1] Thus you see by these instances that men that have God for their portion will courageously own God, and bravely and resolutely stand up for God, whatever comes on it.

The blood that hath been shed in most nations under heaven doth clearly evidence this, that men will own their earthly portions, and that they will stand up stoutly, resolutely, and courageously in the defence of them; and so certainly will all those own God, and stand up in the defence of God, his glory, and truth, who have God for their portion. Take a true bred Christian, when he is himself, take a Christian in his ordinary course, and he cannot but own his God, and stand up stoutly and courageously for his God in the face of all difficulties and dangers. But,

[7.] Seventhly, If God be thy portion, then *thou wilt look upon all things below thy God as poor, low, mean, and contemptible things*, Ps. lxxiii. 24, 25. A worldly man looks upon all things below his earthly portion as contemptible; and so doth a Christian look upon all things below his God as contemptible: Philip. iii. 7, 8, 'But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and

[1] Clarke, as before.—G.

I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung' (The Greek word σκύβαλα properly signifies such sordid, coarse, and contemptible things, which are either cast forth by dogs, or cast before dogs),[1] 'that I may win Christ.' And it is very observable, that after this great apostle had been in the third heaven, and had been blessed with a glorious sight of God, he looked upon the world as a poor, mean, low, contemptible thing, 2 Cor. xii. 1–3: Gal. vi. 14, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' Paul scorned, despised, and rejected the world, and the world scorned, despised, and rejected him. Paul cast off the world, and the world cast off him; he disregarded the world, and the world disregarded him; he was dead to the world, and the world was dead to him. The world and Paul were well agreed; the world cared not a pin for Paul, and Paul cared not a straw for the world. And so when Moses had seen him that was invisible, when he had taken a full prospect of that other world, and when he had beheld God as his portion, oh, how doth he slight, scorn, and trample upon all the honours, preferments, profits, pleasures, delights, and contentments of Egypt, as things below him, and as things that in no respects were worthy of him, Heb. xi. 24–27. It is a Rabbinical conceit,[2] that Moses being a child had Pharaoh's crown given him to play withal, and he made no better than a foot-ball of it, and cast it down to the ground, and kicked it about, as if it were a sign of his future vilifying and contemning of temporal things. I shall not much trouble my head about what Moses did when he was a child; but of this I am sure, having the word of God for it, 'That when he was come to years,' Heb. xi. 24, or as the Greek hath it, μέγας γενόμενος, being grown big, or being grown a great one, and so sufficiently understood himself, and knew very well what he did,[3] he did little less than make a foot-ball of Pharaoh's crown. Witness his refusing with an holy scorn and disdain to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and so to succeed Pharaoh in the throne. And so in that Rev. xii. 1, 2, 'And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.' The church here is compared to a woman for her weakness, fruitfulness, and loveliness; and it is observable, that she is clothed with the sun, that is, with Christ's own comeliness and righteousness, which resembles the sun in its several properties and effects, not now to be insisted on. Now this woman, the church, is said to have the moon under her feet. By the moon we are to understand all temporary and transitory things. Now the church treads upon all these things as trash and trumpery that were much below her, and despised by her. Look, as the great men of the world do commonly look upon all portions that are below their own with an eye of scorn, disdain, and contempt, as Haman did, Esther v. 9–14; and as those bold daring sinners did, Ps. lxxiii. 4-14. So do those that have God for their portion look upon all things below their God with an eye of

[1] Dogs' dung, some interpret the word.
[2] Joh. Plantavit. *Florileg. Rabbinicum.*
[3] Some conclude he was forty years old now from that, Acts vii. 23.

scorn and disdain. I have read of Lazarus, that after his resurrection from the dead he was never seen to laugh; his thoughts, his heart, his affections were so fixed upon God, and so taken up with God, with his portion, that he was as a dead man to all the gay and gallant things of the world, he saw nothing in them worthy of a smile.

And so when once Galeacius, that famous Italian marquis, came to understand that God was his portion, in the face of the highest offers imaginable, of honour, favour, profit, and preferment, he cried out, Cursed be he that prefers all the glory of the world to one day's communion with God.

The old Grecians, who had altogether fed on acorns before, when bread came in among them, they made no reckoning of their mast, but reserved it only for their swine.[1] And the Lacedæmonians despised their iron and leathern money, when gold and silver came in use among them.[2] So when a man comes once to experience God to be his portion, ah, at what a low rate will he value the swelling honours, the deceitful riches, and the vanishing pleasures of this beggarly world, John iv. 14. Christians are compared to eagles,[3] Mat. xxiv. 28. Now the eagle is a kingly, a princely bird; it is a bird of a sharp piercing sight, and of a swift and lofty flight; it flies high and sets light by things below, except it be when necessity compels her: and so it is with those that have God for their portion; they fly high and they live high, in God, and therefore they cannot but set light by the toys and trifles of the world. But,

[8.] Eighthly, If God be thy portion, then *thy God is most precious to thee, then thou settest the highest price and value imaginable upon thy God.* Every man sets the highest price upon his portion. Though a man may set a good price upon his delightful gardens, his pleasant walks, his delicate fish-ponds, his fruitful trees, his sweet flowers, &c., yet it is no price to that which he sets upon his portion. Well, says a man, though here be an hundred things to delight my eye, and to please my fancy, and to satiate my appetite, yet I infinitely value my portion above them all. And who but a fool in folio will value a thousand a year above a few accommodations that are only for pleasure and delight? So though a Christian may set a considerable value upon all his outward comforts and contentments, yet it is no value to that he sets upon his God, upon his portion. This and that is precious to me, saith a Christian, but my God is infinitely more precious than all, Ps. xxiii. 24, 25, iv. 6, 7. A Christian sets up God above his goods, Heb. x. 34; and above his lusts, Gal. v. 24; and above his relations, 1 Sam. xxx. 1–7; yea, and above his very life: Rev. xii. 11, 'And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death: Ps. lxiii. 3, 'Thy loving-kindness is better than life.' The Hebrew is *chaiim, lives.* Put many lives together, yet there is more excellency and glory in the least beam, in the least discovery of divine love, than there is in them all. A man may be weary of life, but never of divine love. Histories tell us of many that have been weary of their lives, but no histories can furnish us with an instance of any one that was ever weary of divine love. Look, as the people prized David above themselves, saying, 'Thou art worth ten thousand of us,' 2 Sam. xviii. 3, so they that have

[1] *Eustath.* in Homer. [2] Seneca, *de Benefic.* [3] Query?—G.

indeed God for their portion, oh how do they prize God above themselves, and above everything below themselves! and doubtless they that in a course do not lift up God above all, they have no interest in God at all. Whatever a man eyes as his greatest interest, that he sets up above all, and before all other things in the world. Now if a man eyes God as his greatest interest, he cannot but set God a-top of all. I have not faith enough to believe that ever such did truly love God who love anything more than God, or who set up anything above God, Luke xiv. 26. Look, as Darius set up Daniel over all, and as Pharaoh set up Joseph above all, so a man that hath God for his portion, he sets up God over all, and he sets up God above all. One [Augustine] set so high a price upon Christ, that he hath long since told us that he would willingly go through hell to Christ; and saith another [Bernard], I had rather be in my chimney-corner with Christ, than in heaven without him. When one of the martyrs was offered riches and honours if he would recant, he made this excellent answer, Do but offer me somewhat that is better than my Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall see what I will say to you.[1] And I have read of another, that set so high a price upon the Lord Jesus, that whensoever he did but mention the name of Jesus, his eyes dropped tears. Were every star in the firmament a sun, yet a man that hath God for his portion would prize him above them all.

Do you ask me where be my jewels? My jewels are my husband, said Phocion's wife.[2] Do you ask me where be my ornaments? My ornaments are my two sons, brought up in virtue and learning, said the mother of the Gracchi.[3] Do you ask me where be my treasures? My treasures are my friends, said Constantius, the father of Constantine. So if you ask a Christian that hath God for his portion where his jewels, his ornaments, his treasures, his comforts, and the delights of his soul are, he will answer you that they are all in God, he will tell you that God is his portion, and that God is his great all, and that he enjoys all in God, and God in all, and therefore he cannot but prize God above all. But to prevent mistakes in this weighty case, let me give you a few brief hints; as,

[1.] First, If God be truly precious to thee, then *all of God is precious to thee;* his name is precious to thee, his honour is precious to thee, his ordinances are precious to thee, his Sabbaths are precious to thee, his promises are precious to thee, his precepts are precious to thee, his threatenings are precious to thee, his rebukes are precious to thee, his people are precious to thee, and all his concernments are precious to thee. Look, as every sparkling stone that is set round about a rich diamond is precious in the eyes of the jeweller, so is every sparkling excellency in God precious in his eyes that sets an high value upon God. Look, as all of the new-born babe is precious in the eyes of the tender mother,[4] as head, face, hands, arms, body, feet, &c., so all of God is very precious in his eyes that hath any tender regard of God; and look, as all of an husband is precious in the eyes of a loving wife, viz.,

[1] Johannes Mollius. [Clarke, as before.—G.]
[2] Plutarch, Phocion. [3] Ibid.—G
[4] It was an harlot that would have the child divided, 1 Kings iii. 25, 26.

his person, name, credit, honour, estate, liberty, life, &c., so all of God is very precious in his eyes that loves God with a real love, with a superlative love. But,

[2.] Secondly, If God be most precious to thee, then *all the dishonours that are done to God, his truth, his worship, his ways, his ordinances, his institutions, his government, his people, are most grievous and burdensome to thee.* 'The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me,' Ps. lxix. 9; 'I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved, because they kept not thy word,' Ps. cxix. 158. The word that is here translated *grieved* is from *katat*, that signifies to loathe, abhor, and contend: I beheld the transgressors, and I loathed them; I beheld the transgressors, and I abhorred them; I beheld the transgressors, and I contended with them; but not so much because they were mine enemies, as because they were thine. It is just between God and all those that have a precious esteem of him, as it is between two lute-strings that are tuned one to another; no sooner one is struck but the other trembles. A saint cannot see God struck but his heart will tremble, Jer. ix. 1–4. A father, lying upon his death-bed,[1] called three children to him which he kept, and told them that one only of them was his natural son, and that the other two were only brought up by him; therefore unto him only he gave all his goods; but which of those three was his own son he would not in any wise declare. When he was dead, every one pleaded his birthright, and the matter being brought to trial, the judge, for the making, if possible, a true discovery, took this course. He caused the dead corpse of the father to be set up against a tree, and commanded the three sons to take bows and arrows to shoot at their father, to see who could come nearest to his heart. The first and second did shoot and hit him, but the third was very much angry and displeased with them both, and through the natural affection of a child to a father, threw away his bow and arrows, and would not shoot at all. This being done, the judge gave this sentence, viz., that the two first that shot at their supposed father's heart were no sons, but that the third son, that would not shoot at all, and that was very much displeased with those that did shoot, was the true son, and that he should have the goods. O sirs! every bitter word is an arrow shot at the heart of God, and every bloody oath is an arrow shot at the heart of God, and every heavy curse is an arrow shot at the heart of God, and every superstitious custom is an arrow shot at the heart of God, and every snare that is laid for the righteous is an arrow shot at the heart of God, and every yoke that is laid upon the people of God is an arrow shot at the heart of God, and every affront that by debauched persons is given to God is an arrow shot at the heart of God, &c. And what true bred sons, what ingenuous sons, can see such arrows every hour in the day shot at the heart of God, and hear of such arrows that are shot a thousand thousand times in a day at the heart of God, and not grieve and mourn, and not be afflicted, troubled, displeased, and astonished to see men and to hear of men that were once made in the image of God to be turned into such incarnate devils, as thus to deal with God, yea, with such a God as can speak them into hell at his pleasure. But,

[1] Mr Perkins's 'Government of the Tongue.'

[3.] Thirdly, If God be most precious to you, then *you will part with anything for God, then you will let go anything, that you may hold your God, and enjoy your God,* Philip. iii. 7, 8, Mat. xiii. 46; then your Isaac shall be made a sacrifice, if God will have it so, Gen. xxii., and your Benjamin shall be sent into Egypt, if God will have it so, Gen. xliii.; then your Jonah shall be cast overboard, if God will have it so, Jonah i.; then out goes the right eye, and off goes the right hand, upon a divine command; then you will never cry out, Oh! this mercy is too near to me to part with for God, and that comfort is too dear to me to part with for God, &c. Oh no; but then you will say, as the king of Sodom said to Abraham, 'Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself,' Gen. xiv. 21. So you will say, 'Give us God, oh give us God, and let who will take the goods, let who will take the honours, and the profits, and the pleasures of this world; it is enough that Joseph is alive; it is enough if we may but enjoy our God. A prince will part with anything rather than he will part with his crown-jewels; and so will a Christian rather part with anything, than, upon choice, to part with his God, whom he values above all the crown-jewels in the world. But,

[4.] Fourthly, If God be most precious to thee, then *thou canst never have enough of God;* thou canst never have enough of communion with God; thou canst never have enough of the presence of God; thou canst never have enough of the Spirit of God; thou canst never have enough of the discoveries of God; thou canst never have enough of the assistance of God; thou canst never have enough of the secret influences and incomes of God; thou canst never have enough of the comforts and strong consolations of God, &c.[1] The grave, the barren womb, the mammonist, the pope, the Turk, the devil, and hell, will be as soon satisfied as thou canst be satisfied without clearer, further, and fuller enjoyments of God. 'No man,' saith God to Moses, 'can see my face, and live,' Exod. xxxiii. 20; upon which words Austin makes this short but sweet reply, 'Then, Lord, let me die, that I may see thy face.' It is impossible that ever a man's heart should rest satisfied till he comes to a full and perfect enjoyment of that which he hath set up as his grand interest, as his great all. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, If God be most precious to thee, then *thou wilt give up thyself wholly to God without any reservation.* Whatever a man sets up as his great interest, to that he devotes himself, to the service of that he wholly gives up himself; so when a man eyes God as his most precious interest, and sets up God as his most precious interest, he cannot but devote himself wholly to God, he cannot but give up himself wholly to God:[2] Ps. cxix. 94, 'I am thine, save me.' I am not my own, nor sin's, nor Satan's, nor the world's, nor friends', nor relations', but 'I am thine,' I am really thine, I am wholly thine, I am only thine, I am always thine, I am thine to be sanctified, and I am thine to be saved; I am thine to be commanded, and I am thine to be ruled. Lord, I am thine own, and therefore do with thine own as thou pleasest, and dispose of thine own as thou pleasest. I am at thy foot, willing in some measure to be anything or nothing, as shall seem best in thine own eyes. When the keys of the whole house, and of every room in

[1] Ps. xxvii. 4; lxxxiv. 1–12; xlii. 1, 2; lxiii. 1–3; Cant. viii. 14; Rev. xxii. 20.
[2] Cant. ii. 16; Acts vii. 2–4; xiii. 22; Luke v. 6, 7.

the house, are given up to the king to be at his dispose, at his service, then he is entertained as a king, and honoured as a king, and valued and prized as a king; and so when all the keys of the soul, and every room in the soul, and every faculty of the soul, are given up to God to be at his dispose, at his service, then God is entertained as a God, and honoured as a God, and valued and prized as a God, but not till then. And by these five hints, if you will not put a cheat upon your own souls, you may know whether God sits in the uppermost room of your hearts or no, and whether God be set up in your hearts above all, and whether he be indeed your great all, or your all in all. But,

(9.) Ninthly, If God be thy portion, then *there is no loss in all the world that lies so hard and so heavy upon thee as the loss of thy God.* There is no loss under heaven that doth so affect and afflict a man that hath God for his portion as the loss of his God. David met with many a loss, but no loss made so sad and so great a breach upon his spirit as the loss of the face of God, the loss of the favour of God: Ps. xxx. 6, 7, 'In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.' The Hebrew word *bahal* signifies to be greatly troubled, to be sorely terrified, as you may see in that 1 Sam. xxviii. 21, 'And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled.' Here is the same Hebrew word *bahal*.[1] Saul was so terrified, affrighted, and disanimated with that dreadful news that the devil in Samuel's likeness told him, that his very vital spirits so failed him that he fell into a deadly swoon. And it was even so with David upon God's hiding of his face. David was like a withered flower that had lost all its sap, life, and vigour, when God had wrapped up himself in a cloud. The life of some creatures lieth in the light and warmth of the sun; and so doth the life of the saints lie in the light and warmth of God's countenance. And as in an eclipse of the sun there is a drooping in the whole frame of nature, so when God hides his face, gracious souls cannot but droop and languish, and bow down themselves before him. Many insensible creatures, some by opening and shutting, as marigolds and tulips, others by bowing and inclining the head, as the solsequy[2] and mallow-flowers are so sensible of the presence and absence of the sun, that there seems to be such a sympathy between the sun and them, that if the sun be gone or clouded, they wrap up themselves, or hang down their heads, as being unwilling to be seen by any eye but his that fills them; and just thus it was with David when God had hid his face in a cloud. And it is very observable that Job did bear up very sweetly, bravely, patiently, and nobly under all his great losses of children, estate, &c.; but when the arrows of the Almighty were got within him, then he complains that his grief was heavier than the sands of the sea, Job vi. 1–5; and when the face of God was hidden from him, how sadly doth he lament and bewail the withdrawings of God: 'Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right

[1] And so this Hebrew word *bahal* you have again in that Dan. v. 9, to express the greatness of Belshazzar's trouble and terror when he saw the handwriting upon the wall, and when none of his wise men could read the writing, &c.

[2] The early name of the '*sun*-flower.' The *solsequium* of Linnæus.—G.

hand, but I cannot see him,' Job xxiii. 8, 9. You know there is no pain more grievous and tormenting than that of breaking the bones. Now David again and again pitches upon this, to hint unto you that dreadful smart and pain that his soul was under when he had lost his communion with God, and when his God was withdrawn from him, and had hid his face from him, Ps. xxxviii. 8, li. 8. And so the church sadly laments the loss of her beloved in that Solomon's Song, v. 6, 'I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone. My soul failed when he spake,' or, 'he was gone, he was gone.' Now this passionate duplication speaks out her very great grief and trouble. Like a sad widow, she sits down and wrings her hands, and cries out, 'He is gone, he is gone;' 'My soul failed me;' or, as the Hebrew hath it, *Naphshi jatsa*, 'my soul went out of me.' I was even as an astonished creature, I was even as a dead creature, to note how greatly and how deeply she was troubled and perplexed upon the account of his withdrawing from her. Oh! the fear, the terror, the horror, the dread, the grief, the sorrow that fell upon the spouse's heart when her beloved had turned his back upon her. And so it was with Mary: John xx. 11–13, 'But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they said unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.' Of all losses, Mary was least able to bear the loss of her Lord. The loss was so great, and so heavy the loss, that she was not able to stand under it with dry eyes. Mary's mourning for the loss of her Lord was like that of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon, Zech. xii. 11. There is no loss that comes so near to a Christian's heart as the loss of his Lord. A Christian can a thousand times better bear the loss of his name, which next to his soul and his grace is the best jewel that he hath in all the world, the loss of his estate, the loss of his liberty, the loss of his nearest and dearest relations, yea, the very loss of his life, than he can bear the loss of his God.

You see how sadly Micah takes on for the loss of his wooden gods, in that Judges xviii. 23, 24, 'And they cried unto the children of Dan: and they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company? And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away; and what have I more? and what is that ye say unto me, What aileth thee?' Now if Micah was so affected and afflicted upon the loss of his idol gods, his wooden gods, what cause then have Christians to be deeply affected and afflicted when they come to lose their God, which is the true God, the living God, the only God, and the God of gods! You know that when Samson's locks were cut off, his strength was gone, Judges xvi. 19–21; and therefore, though he thought to go out, and do as great things as he had formerly done, yet he found by woful experience that he could not; for now he was become as another man. And it is just so with the choicest saints: when their God is gone, their locks are cut, and their strength is gone, their doing strength, and their suffering strength, and their bearing strength, and their wrestling strength, and their prevailing strength, &c., is gone when their God is

gone; yea, when God goes, all goes. When the king removes, all his train follows; when God goes, comforts go; when God goes, joys go; when God goes, peace goes; when God goes, prosperity goes; when God goes, friends go; when God goes, all content and satisfaction goes; and therefore it is no wonder to see a Christian better bear any loss than the loss of his God, for in losing of him he loses all at a clap.[1] A Christian counts it his only happiness to enjoy his God, and his only unhappiness to be deprived of him. The constant language of a Christian is, 'None but God, none but God;' as it was once the language of the martyr, 'None but Christ, none but Christ.'[2]

Outward losses to some men have been unsufferably afflictive. One being turned out of his estate runs out of his wits, another hangs himself with the same hands with which he had formerly told his portion. Menippus of Phœnicia having lost his goods, strangled himself.[3] Dinarcus Phidon, at a certain great loss, cut his own throat, to save the charge of a cord.[4] When Henry the Second heard that his city Mentz was taken, he let fall this blasphemous speech: I shall never, said he, love God any more, that hath suffered a city so dear to me to be taken away from me. And Augustus Cæsar [Suetonius], in whose time Christ was born, was so troubled and astonished at the loss and overthrow that Varus gave him, that for certain months together he let the hair of his head and beard grow without cutting, and sometimes he would run his head against the very doors, and cry out, Quintilius Varus, deliver up my legions again; Quintilius Varus, deliver up my legions again, &c.[5] I might give you many sad instances nearer home, but that I love not to harp upon so sad a string. But certainly no outward losses can lie so heavy upon the spirit of a worldling, as the loss of God lies upon the spirit of a saint.[6] I have read of a religious woman, that having brought forth nine children, professed that she had rather endure all the pains of those nine travails at once than endure the misery of the loss of God's presence. A man can better bear any loss than the loss of his box of jewels, and than the loss of his writings and evidences that he hath to shew for his estate; and therefore, when his house is on fire, he doth not cry out, Oh save that bed, or that chest, or that dish, or that stool, &c.; but he cries out, Oh save my box of jewels! oh save my writings! I care not though all be consumed, so my box of jewels and my evidences be but saved. Now God is a Christian's box of jewels, he is a Christian's grand evidence that he hath to shew for another world; and therefore his greatest fear is of losing his God, and his greatest care is of keeping his God. If his box of jewels be safe, then all is safe; but if they are lost, all is lost; and how then is it possible for a Christian to bear up bravely under the loss of all? A man may bear up bravely under the loss of his lumber, and under the loss of his household goods, so long as his jewels are safe and his writings are safe; but if his box of jewels should be lost, and his writings should be burnt, why, then, he wrings his hands, and cries out, Oh, I am undone! I am undone! I am undone! So a Christian can bear up bravely under this worldly loss, and that worldly loss, and the other worldly loss, so long

[1] *Qui te non habet, Domine Deus, totum perdidit.*—Bernard.
[2] Sanders, also Hudson, as before.—G. [3] Oehler, *Varro.*—G. [4] Pheidon: but ?—G.
[5] Qu. Atrus Varus? but ?—G. [6] Compare the 77th and the 88th Psalms together.

as he enjoys his God; but when he hath lost his God, oh then, he cannot but wring his hands, and cry out, I am undone! I am undone! I am undone! I have lost my God, and in losing of him, I have lost my life, I have lost my love, I have lost my joy, I have lost my crown, I have lost my heaven, I have lost my happiness, I have lost my all. O Christians! if God be your portion, it will be thus with you upon the loss of your God. But,

(10.) Tenthly, If God be thy portion, then thou wilt *set the highest price, value, and esteem upon those that have God for their portion*, Ps. xvi. 3, Prov. xii. 26, and chap. xxviii. 6. A man that hath God for his portion, never values men for their arts, parts, gifts, gay clothes, gold chains; no, nor by their birth, breeding, high offices, or great places; no, nor by their outward dignities, honours, or riches, &c., but by their interest and propriety in God. A man that hath God for his portion, prizes a poor ragged Lazarus that hath God for his portion, before a rich Dives that hath only gold for his portion. If thou hast God for thy portion, then there is no man in court, city, or country, to that man that hath God for his portion; then there is no man in a parish, a country, a kingdom, to him that hath God for his portion. A man that hath God for his portion, hath an higher esteem and a greater respect for a Job, though stripped of all, and sitting upon a dunghill, than he hath for a wicked Ahab, though sitting on his royal throne. Paul set a higher price upon Onesimus, though but a servant, a slave, because he had God for his portion, than he did upon Nero, though he was a great and mighty emperor, Philem. 10, 12, 17; 2 Tim. iv. 17. And king Ingo valued poor ragged Christians that had God for their portion, above all his glittering pagan nobles that had only the world for their portion, saying, that when all his pagan nobles should, in all their pomp and glory, be turned into hell, those poor Christians, that had God for their portion, should be his consorts and fellow-princes in heaven. Look, as men that have their portion in this world do value men according to their worldly portions, so that they that have most gold and silver, and they that have most lordships and lands, they are the best men, the happiest men, the only men in their eyes; so a Christian that hath God for his portion, he sets the highest value upon those that have God for their portion, and there are no men in all the world that are so high in his books as they are. A man that hath an interest in God loves none, nor likes none, nor honours none, nor delights in none, nor exalts none, nor values none, to those that have God for their portion. Though the men, the great men of this world may sit in the uppermost seats at his table, yet they that have God for their portion, sit in the uppermost rooms of his heart. The Jews say, that those seventy souls that went with Jacob into Egypt, were as much worth as all the seventy nations in the world. And I may say, that one soul that hath God for his portion, is more worth than all the souls in the world that have only the world for their portion. A man that hath God for his portion, cannot but set a very high value upon all those that have God for their portion, though in disputable things they may differ from him. A man that hath God for his portion, had rather live with those that have God for their portion in a prison, in a dungeon, than live with those that have only the world for their portion in a

royal palace; as Algerius,[1] an Italian martyr, was wont to say, that he had rather live in prison with Cato than with Cæsar in the senate house. And Doctor Taylor, the martyr, rejoiced exceedingly that ever he came into prison, because he came there to have acquaintance with that angel of God, John Bradford, as he calls him.[2] When Joseph was in Egypt, the Scripture saith, according to the Hebrew phrase, that 'he tied the princes of Pharaoh's court about his heart,' Ps. cv. 22; so a man that hath God for his portion, he doth as it were tie those that have God for their portion about his heart. Oh, he is always best when they are most in his eye, and nearest to his heart. It is his happiness on this side happiness to enjoy communion with them, and it is the greatest unhappiness in this world to be separated from them, Ps. cxx. 5–7. A man that hath God for his portion, values the company of such that have God for their portion above all other company in the world, and he values the favour of such above all other men's favour in the world, and he values the prayers of such above all other men's prayers in the world, and he values the counsels of such above all other men's counsel in the world, and he values the experiences of such above all other men's experiences in the world, and he values the interest of such above all other men's interest in the world, and he values the hopes and expectations of such above all other men's hopes and expectations in the world, and he values the examples of such above the examples of all other men in the world, and he values the displeasure and anger of such above all other men's displeasure and anger in the world. But,

[11.] Eleventhly, If God be your portion, *then you are his portion.* If you have an interest in God, then God hath an interest in you; if you have a propriety in God, then God hath a propriety in you; if God be truly yours, then you are really his: Cant. ii. 16, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his;' Ps. cxix. 94, 'I am thine, save me;' I am not mine own, I am not sin's, I am not Satan's, I am not the world's, I am not friends', I am not relations', but I am thine, save me; I am really thine, I am totally thine, I am solely thine, I am everlastingly thine, save me: Ezek. xvi. 8, 'I entered into covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine;' Deut. xxxii. 9, 'For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.'[3] Though God's people are despised of the world, yet they are dear to God, for they are his portion. In these words, 'Jacob is the lot of his inheritance,' he alludes to the division of the land of Canaan, as if the sons of Jacob had fallen to him by lot. The Lord's people are as dear to God, and as near to God, and in as great account with God, as earthly portions and inheritances are or can be among the sons of men: Jer. xii. 10, 'Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion (or as the Hebrew hath it, my portion of desire or of delight) a desolate wildernes.' God's people are not only his portion, but they are his pleasant portion, yea, they are his desirable portion, his delightful portion. If the Lord be your portion, then you are his nheritance, Isa. xix. 25; and his peculiar treasure, Exod. xix. 5; and

[1] Clarke, as before, p. 187.—G. [2] Clarke, as before.—G.

[3] There are none that have that large interest and propriety in the saints that God hath: Zech. ii. 12, 'And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again.'

his glory, Isa. xlvi. 13; and his ornament, Ezek. vii. 20; and his throne, Jer. xvii. 12; and his diadem, Isa. lxii. 3; and his jewels, Mal. iii. 17. These scriptures speak out plainly and clearly that great propriety and interest that God hath in all those that have a propriety and interest in him. O sirs! look, that as in all God hath you have an interest, so in all that you have God hath an interest; and look, as what God is, he is for you, so what you are, you are for God; and look, as God is sincerely for you, so you are sincerely for God; and as God is wholly for you, so you are wholly for God; and as God is only for you, so you are only for God; and as God is in all things for you, so you are in all things for God; and as God is at all times for you, so you are at all times for God. O sirs! There are none under heaven that have that interest in you as God hath, if indeed he be your portion. Look what interest the head hath in the members, the husband in the wife, the father in the child, the lord in his servant, the general in his soldier, and the prince in his subject, that, all that, and more than that, hath God in all those that have an interest in him. There is no man in the world that hath such an interest in himself, as God hath in him, if indeed God be his portion. Sin cannot say to a man that hath God for his portion, Thou art mine; nor Satan cannot say to a man that hath God for his portion, Thou art mine; nor the world cannot say to a man that hath God for his portion, Thou art mine; nor the creature cannot say to a man that hath God for his portion, Thou art mine. It is only God that can say to such a man, Thou art mine. As in marriage, none can say, This woman is mine, but the husband; so none can say to a man that hath God for his portion, Thou art mine, but God alone. Look, as no man can truly say, that God is my Lord, and my God, and my father, and my friend, and my wisdom, and my counsel, and my righteousness, and my consolation, and my salvation, and my portion, and my light, and my life, and my love, and my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer, and my strength, and my buckler, and my high tower, and my help, and my happiness, and my blessedness, and my all in all, but he that hath God for his portion; so none but God can look upon a gracious person, and say, This gracious person is mine; he is my bride, my child, my friend, my favourite, my beloved, my darling, my joy, my crown; his heart is set upon me, and his love is inflamed towards me, and his trust and confidence is fixed on me, and his desires and longings are running out after me, and all his joys and delights are terminated in me. But,

[12.] Twelfthly, If God be your portion, then certainly *the least of God is very dear and precious to you.* Oh then the least truth of God will be very precious to you, and the least command of God will be very precious to you, and the least child of God will be very precious to you, and the least concernment of God will be very precious to you. Look, as the least beam of light is precious, and as the least drop of honey is precious, and as the least dust of gold is precious, and as the least degree of health and strength is precious, and as the least measure of liberty is precious; so the very least of God is very precious to that man that hath God for his portion. Look, as every little piece and parcel of a worldly man's portion is very dear and precious to him, so every little piece and parcel of God, if I may so speak, is very dear and precious to him that hath God for his portion. The least glimpse and manifestations of the love

and favour of God, the least taste of the mercies of God, the least anointings of the Spirit of God, the least comunications of the grace of God, and the least drops of the consolations of God, are exceedingly sweet and precious to him that hath God for his portion. The least good look that a man hath from God, and the least good word that a man hears from God, and the least love letter and love token that a man receives from God, is exceedingly precious to that man that hath God for his portion, 'One day in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere,' Ps. lxxxiv. 10. He doth not say, One year in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere, but *One day* in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere; nor doth he not say, One quarter of a year in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere, but '*One day* in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere;' nor he doth not say, One month in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere, but '*One day* in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere;' to shew that the very least of God is exceeding precious to a gracious soul that hath God for his portion.

Now by these twelve particulars you may all know whether God be your portion or no, except you are resolved beforehand to put a cheat upon your own immortal souls, and so to make yourselves miserable in both worlds. And let thus much suffice for this use of trial and examination.

Now if, upon trial and examination, any of you shall come to some comfortable satisfaction in your own spirits, that God is your portion, and that you have an undoubted interest and propriety in God, oh then I would upon the knee of my soul entreat and beseech you, I might say, charge and command you, to evidence and declare to all the world your interest and propriety in God.

But you will say, How should we evidence and declare to the world our interest and propriety in God? we are willing to do it, if we did but know how we should do it. Why then, thus:

[1.] First, Evidence and declare your interest and propriety in God, *by your labouring and endeavouring with all your might to draw on others to get an interest and propriety in God.*[1] O sirs! have you been convinced of the necessity and excellency of interest and propriety in God? have you experienced the profit, the sweet, the comfort, and the happiness of propriety and interest in God? and how then can you but strive, as for life, to persuade others to look after their interest and propriety in Christ, as the one thing necessary? When Samson had tasted honey, he gave his father and mother some with him, Judges xiv. 8, 9. O my brethren, propriety and interest in God is so sweet a morsel, that I cannot see how it is possible for a man to taste of it and not to commend it to others. They that have tasted that the Lord is gracious, cannot but cry out with the psalmist, 'Oh taste and see that the Lord is good,' Ps. xxxiv. 8. Propriety and interest in God will never make a man a churl, it will never work a man to make a monopoly of so rare a jewel as that is. Oh the fervent prayers! Oh the burning desires! Oh the vehement wishes! Oh the strong endeavours of such that have an interest and propriety in God, to draw on others

[1] Num. x. 29; John i. 39–49, iv. 28–30; Acts x. 24–27.

to seek after an interest and propriety in God! All true propriety and interest in God is of a diffusive nature; it is like light, that will spread itself over all; it is like leaven, that will run through all; it is like Mary's box of sweet ointment, that filled all the house with the sweet scent thereof. If thou art a minister, evidence thy propriety in God in doing all thou canst to provoke those that are under thy charge to secure their propriety in God; other things cannot be secured, but propriety in God may be secured, Acts xxvi. 29. If thou art a magistrate that hast a propriety in God, evidence it by doing all thou canst, by thy commands, and by thy counsel, and by thy example, and by thy prayers, to persuade and win others over to be restless till they have secured their interest and propriety in God, Joshua xxiv. 15. If thou art a father that hast interest and propriety in God, oh, then, let thy soul be still in travail for thy children, till Christ be formed in them, till they are new born, and till they have experienced the power and sweet of propriety and interest in God. But,

[2.] Secondly, Evidence your propriety and interest in God, *by keeping far off from all such sinful courses, practices, and compliances, that may any ways put yourselves or others to question the truth of your propriety and interest in God.* Thus did those worthies, 'of whom this world was not worthy,' in that Heb. xi. It is very observable that when the holy things belonging to the sanctuary were to be removed, God commanded Aaron and his sons that there should be a special care had to cover them all over, lest in journeying dust should any ways soil them, Num. iv. 5–13. O beloved! it highly concerns you that have an interest and propriety in God, to look narrowly to your hearts, words, works, and ways, and to see that there be such a covering of grace and holiness, such a covering of care, fear, wisdom, watchfulness, and circumspection over your whole man, that no scandalous sins, pollutions, or defilements be found upon you; according to that exhortation of the apostle, in that Philip. ii. 15, 'That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine (or shine ye) as lights in the world.' Rev. xiv. 3–5, chap. iii. 4. I have read of the dove, that there is such a native dread of the hawk implanted in her, that she is afraid of every feather that hath grown upon a hawk, and that she so detests and abhors the very sight of any such feather that she will fly from it, and keep at the greatest distance imaginable from it. And shall not that divine fear, O Christians! that is planted by the hand of the Spirit in your hearts, be of as great force and prevalency to keep your souls from all those enormities and wicked compliances that may in the least occasion you or others to question your propriety and interest? Remember Francis Spira, and tremble! You know a scrivener may by one great blot at last spoil all that he hath done for many days before upon a large patent or lease; so a man may by one foul blot, by one enormous crime, by one wretched act of compliance, dash and obliterate the fairest copy of a virtuous life, and raze out all the visible golden characters of divine graces that once seemed to be printed upon the soul. Look, as one drop of ink coloureth a whole glass of water, so one gross sin, one shameful action, one hour's compliance with anything of antichrist, will colour and stain all the great

things that ever you have suffered, and all the good things that ever you have performed; it will stain and colour all the good prayers that ever you have made, and all the good sermons that ever you have heard, and all the good books that ever you have read, and all the good words that ever you have spoke, and all the good works that ever you have done. And therefore, whatever you do, keep off from sin, and keep off from all sinful compliances, as you would keep off from hell itself. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Declare and evidence your propriety and interest in God, *by maintaining and keeping up the sense of your interest and propriety in God, in opposition to all other interest whatsoever.* Maintain your interest in God in opposition to sin's interest, and in opposition to Satan's interest, and in opposition to the world's interest, and in opposition to antichrist's interest, and in opposition to all carnal and superstitious interests, Ps. lxiii. 1, Rev. xiv. 1–4: as Moses did, and as Joshua and Caleb did, and as Mordecai and Nehemiah did, and as Daniel and the three children did, and as the apostles and the primitive Christians did. Certainly the heart of a gracious man cannot but rise, and his anger and indignation cannot but swell, against every thing and every interest that threatens to make a breach upon his interest and propriety in God, Ps. lxix. 9. A man that hath an interest and propriety in God, in the midst of all oppositions, is like a man made up all of fire, walking in stubble and straw: he overcomes and consumes all oppositions, and all difficulties are but whetstones to his fortitude. He encourages his soul in the face of all oppositions and dangers, as Hezekiah once did his soldiers in that 2 Chron. xxxii. 7, 8, 'Be strong and courageous, be not dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.' He is a fool, we say, that will be laughed out of his coat; but certainly he is a fool in folio that will be laughed out of his skin, nay, out of his soul, out of his profession, out of his eternal salvation; but doubtless such fools as these have never experienced the sweet of propriety and interest in God. Without all peradventure, there were many broad jests and many bitter scoffs broken upon Noah, whilst he was a-building of his ark. The people laughed at him, and derided him, and thought the poor old man doated and dreamed, not, as we say, of a dry summer, but of a wet winter; but yet Noah's propriety and interest in God being clear, Noah begins his work, and goes on his work, and never ceases till he had finished that work that God had set him about.

Alciat observes in one of his Emblems,[1] that a dog then barketh most when the moon is at fullest; but whether it be by some special influence that it then worketh on the dog, or whether it be occasioned by the spots in the moon represented unto him in the form and shape of another dog, I shall not conclude; but yet let the dog bark never so much, the moon will run her course. She will walk her station securely through the heavens, though all the dogs in the town bark never so fiercely at her; so a man that hath an interest and propriety in God, and knows it,

[1] Alciati, *Emblemata*, 1535, &c.—G.

he is like the moon, he will hold on his course heavenwards and holinesswards, though all the lewd and debauched wicked wretches in city and country should bark at him, and deride him, and oppose him, and speak all manner of evil against him. Propriety and interest in God will make a man set light by all such paper-shot, yea, it will carry him through the pikes, not only of evil tongues, but it will also carry him through the most fierce and eager opposition that either Satan himself, or any of his instruments, can possibly raise against him. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Declare and evidence your propriety and interest in God, *by your sweet and noble carriage and deportment towards those that have an interest and propriety in God.* Look, as a child carries it in a different way to his father to what he doth to others, so you must carry it in a different way towards those that have an interest and propriety in God, to what you do towards those that have no interest nor propriety at all in God. Though a wife be very kind and courteous to all comers and goers, yet she carries it in a very different way to her husband from what she doth to all others; she carries it with a great deal more kindness, and sweetness, and tenderness, and familiarness, and nobleness, &c., towards her husband, than she doth towards others, whether they be friends or strangers; and just thus should you carry it towards those that have a propriety and interest in God. I have not faith enough to believe that such men have any interest and propriety in God, who carry it very strangely, and proudly, and churlishly, and scornfully, and deridingly, and tyrannically, and disdainfully, and enviously, and maliciously, and rigorously, and sourly, and bitterly, &c., towards those that have an interest and propriety in God, and yet carry it at the same time very fairly, and sweetly, and courteously, &c., towards such wretches that have no interest or propriety in God at all, yea, to such that blaspheme his name, and that profane his Sabbaths, and that pollute his ordinances, and that trample upon his mercies, and that despise his warnings, and that are given up to their own hearts' lusts, and that live as if there were neither God, nor heaven, nor hell. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Evidence your interest and propriety in God, *by doing such things for God, which such as have no interest in God cannot do, nor will not do, nor have no heart nor mind to do.* Evidence your interest in God, by doing singular things for God, Mat. v. 44–48; by doing such things for God that are above their reach that have no interest nor propriety in God at all; as by denying yourselves, your sinful selves, your natural selves, and your religious selves; and by keeping a singular guard upon your own hearts, words, and ways; and by stepping over the world's crown to take up Christ's cross, as Moses did, Heb. xi. 24; and by lessening yourselves to greaten Christ, as John did, John iii. 30–32; and by lifting up of Christ above your lusts, above yourselves, above the world, above outward privileges, above your performances, above your arts, parts, and gifts, as Paul did, Philip. iii. 7–9; and by blessing a taking God as well as a giving God, as Job did, Job i.; and by rejoicing and glorying in all the afflictions and sufferings that befall you for Christ's sake and the gospel's sake, as the apostles and primitive Christians did; and by choosing to suffer rather than to sin, as those worthies did 'of whom this world was not worthy;' and by keeping of yourselves from the defilements, pollutions, and abomina-

tions of the times, as some in Sardis did, Rev. iii. 4; and by following of the Lamb wheresoever he goes, as those hundred, forty and four thousand did, who had their Father's name written in their foreheads, chap. xiv. 1–5. O sirs! it is infinitely better not to challenge any interest or propriety in God at all, than to pretend high as to interest and propriety in God, and yet to do no more for God, nay, it may be not so much, than they that have no interest nor propriety in God at all. But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, Evidence your interest and propriety in God, *by falling roundly in with the interest of God, in opposition to all carnal interests in the world.* O sirs! the interest of God will by degrees eat out and swallow up all other interests in the world. Look, as Pharaoh's lean kine ate up the fat, Gen. xli. 4, and as Aaron's rod swallowed up the Egyptians' rods, Exod. vii. 11, 12, so the interest of God will in time eat up and swallow up all that superstitious carnal worldly antichristian and Satanical interest that men labour now to uphold, with all their might, Isa. viii. 9, 10. Dan. ii. 35, 'Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.' Verse 44, 'And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.' And so chap. vii. 27, 'And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.' Rev. xvii. 12–14, 'And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.' If these scriptures do not clearly evidence, that the interest of Christ shall swallow up all other interests, I understand nothing. Now mark, the people of God are the interest of God, and the gospel of God is the interest of God, and the ordinances of God are the interest of God, and the institutions and pure worship of God are the interest of God, &c. And therefore, all you that have an interest and propriety in God, evidence it by your ready and resolute falling in with the interest of God. Believe it, they that fall in with the interest of God, shall fall in with the strongest side, and will be sure to carry it against ten thousand worlds. What is the stubble to the flames? what is weakness to strength? what is impotency to omnipotency? what is folly to wisdom? what is emptiness to fulness? No more are all the carnal interests in the world to the interest of God; and therefore thrice happy is that man that falls timely and cordially in with the interest of God.

But now, if upon trial and examination any of you shall find that yet the Lord is not your portion, and this I believe will be the case of many of you, I would exhort all such persons to labour with all their

might, yea, to labour as for life, to get the Lord to be their portion. O sirs! this is the one thing necessary, this is the sun among the stars, this is the work of works that lies upon your hands; when this is done, all is done; till this be done, there is nothing done that will do you good in another world. O sirs! your lives lie upon it, your souls lie upon it, eternity lies upon it, your all lies upon it; and therefore you had need be restless till you have gained the Lord to be your portion.

Now, that I may the more effectually provoke you, and stir you up to this great and glorious, this necessary and weighty work, give me leave to propose these following considerations.

[1.] First, *Consider that thy present portion, thy present condition, is but miserable and cursed,* Lev. xxvi. 14–39, Deut. xxviii. 15–68. All the earth was cursed upon man's fall, and till fallen man comes to be interested in God, all his earthly enjoyments are cursed unto him; his honours are cursed, and his riches are cursed, and his preferments are cursed, and his pleasures are cursed; the whole portion of his cup is nothing but a little cursed vanity: Job xx. 23–29, 'When he is about to fill his belly, God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, and shall rain it upon him while he is eating. He shall flee from the iron weapon, and the bow of steel shall strike him through. It is drawn, and cometh out of the body; yea, the glistering sword cometh out of his gall: terrors are upon him. The increase of his house shall depart, and his goods shall flow away in the day of his wrath. This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God.' And so chap. xxiv. 18, 'He is swift as the waters; their portion is cursed in the earth: he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards.' Prov. iii. 33, 'The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked.' Mal. ii. 2, 'If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.' There is a real curse and a secret curse, an invisible curse and an insensible curse, that lies upon all their souls that have not God for their portion: Gal. iii. 10, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.' And as there is a curse upon all their souls, so there is a curse upon all their comforts, contentments, and enjoyments, that enjoy not God for their portion. Till a man comes to enjoy God for his portion, all his earthly portions are cursed unto him; but when a man comes to enjoy God for his portion, then all his earthly portions are blessed unto him. O sirs! there is no mitigating of the curse, there is no reversing of the curse, there is no altering of the curse, nor there is no taking of the curse from off your souls, nor from off your earthly portions, but by gaining God to be your portion. O sirs! you will live accursed, and you will die accursed, and you will appear before God accursed, and you will be judged and sentenced by God accursed, and you will be sent to hell accursed, and you will remain to all eternity accursed, if God be not your portion: and therefore oh how should this consideration awaken every sinner to give God no rest till he hath given himself as a portion to him. But,

[2.] Secondly, *Consider this, that there is yet a possibility of attain-*

ing God to be thy portion, Luke xviii. 27. All the angels in heaven, and all the men on earth, do not know to the contrary but that God may be thy portion, even thine. If thou art but heartily willing to be divorced from that wicked trinity, the world, the flesh, and the devil, there is no doubt but that God will be thy portion. O sirs! why hath God laid open so clearly and so fully the nature and incomparable excellency of this portion above all other portions before you, but to persuade your hearts, and to draw out your souls to look after this portion, and to make sure this portion, as that wherein all your happiness and blessedness lies? Oh that you were wise to consider that now a prize, an opportunity, is put into your hands, that may make you for ever! You have all the ways, and all the means, and all the helps, and all the advantages imaginable for the obtaining of God to be your portion; so that, if God be not your portion, I shall be so bold to tell you that your destruction is from yourselves, Hosea xiii. 9. O sirs! though God be a golden mine, yet he is such a mine that may be come at if you will but dig, and sweat, and take pains to purpose, Prov. ii. 2–7; though he be a pearl of infinite price, yet Christ can purchase this pearl for you; though he be a matchless and incomparable portion, yet he is such a portion as may be yours, as will be yours, if you are not wanting to your own souls. Why hath God sent his ambassadors early and late? 2 Cor. v. 18–20; and why hath he, even to a miracle, continued them amongst you to this very day, but that they should acquaint you with his wonderful readiness and willingness to bestow himself as a portion upon you? O sirs! God is said to be a God of great mercy, and to be rich and plenteous in mercy, and to be abundant in mercy, and to be transcendent and incomparable in mercy; yea, all the mercies of God are sure mercies, they are royal mercies, they are innumerable mercies, they are bottomless mercies, they are unchangeable mercies, and they are everlasting mercies; and therefore there is no reason for any man to despair of obtaining of God for his portion.[1] But,

[3.] Thirdly, *Consider that God is a portion-sweetening portion.* God is such a portion as will sweeten all other portions; he is a portion that will make every pleasant portion more pleasant, and that will make every bitter portion sweet. Poverty is one man's portion, and sorrow is another man's portion, and crosses and losses are a third man's portion, and reproaches and sufferings are a fourth man's portion, and sickness and diseases are a fifth man's portion, &c. But now God is a portion that will sweeten all these portions. You know the tree that Moses cast into the bitter waters of Marah made them sweet, Exod. xv. 23–25. Now this tree was a type of Christ, who will certainly sweeten all our bitterest potions. The church complained in that Lament. iii. 15, 'that God had filled her with bitterness' (or, as the Hebrew hath it, 'with bitternesses'), 'and that he had made her drunken with wormwood:' and yet this very consideration, that 'the Lord was her portion,' ver. 24, sweetened all. If God be thy portion, there is no condition that can make thee miserable; if God be not thy portion, there is no condition that can make thee happy. If God be not thy portion, in the midst of thy sufficiency thou wilt be in straits; if God be thy portion, in the midst of all thy straits thou shalt enjoy an all-sufficiency in an

[1] Ps. cv. 8; Eph. ii. 4; Ps. lxxxvi. 15; 1 Peter i. 1, 3; Ps. ciii. 11.

all-sufficient God, Job xx. 22. Till God be thy portion, O sinner, thou wilt never taste anything but death and bitterness in all thy comforts, and in all thy contentments, and in all thy enjoyments. But,

[4.] Fourthly, *Consider that all earthly portions are not of that infinite consequence and concernment to you as this portion is.* All earthly portions are but the meat that perisheth, John vi. 27; they are but moth-eaten and canker-eaten treasures, Mat. vi. 19, James v. 3; they are full of uncertainty, yea, they are all over vanity, Eccles. i. 2; they reach not beyond the line of this mortal life; they can neither suit the soul, nor fill the soul, nor satisfy the soul, nor save the soul; they can neither change the heart, nor reform the heart, nor in the least better the heart; they can neither arm a man against temptations, nor lead a man out of temptations, nor make a man victorious over temptations; they can neither direct the conscience when it is in straits, nor relieve the conscience when it is under distress, nor support the conscience when it is under guilt, nor heal the conscience when it is under wounds; they can neither make our peace with God, nor keep our peace with God, nor augment our peace with God; they can neither bring us to Christ, nor unite us to Christ, nor keep us with Christ, nor transform us into the similitude or likeness of Christ; they can neither bring us to heaven, nor fit us for heaven, nor assure us of heaven. In a word, no earthly portion can free us from death, nor in the least avail us in the day of wrath. By all which it is most evident that all earthly portions are of very little consequence and concernment to the sons of men, to the souls of men. Oh, but now God is a portion of infinite consequence and concernment to all the sons and souls of men. No man can hear as he should, nor pray as he should, nor live as he should, nor die as he should, till God be his portion; no man is secure from temporal, spiritual, or eternal judgments, till God be his portion. No man can be happy in this world, or blessed in another world, till God be his portion. O sirs! it is not absolutely necessary that you should have this or that earthly portion, but it is absolutely necessary that you should have God for your portion; for if God be not your portion, all the angels in heaven, nor all the men on earth, cannot prevent your being miserable to all eternity.

[5.] Fifthly, *Consider, that till a man comes to have God for his portion, he never comes to be temptation-proof.* A man that hath God for his portion is temptation-proof; he will say when tempted, as Themistocles did, Give those bracelets to slaves; and as Basil did, who, when he was offered temporary honour, glory, and wealth, &c., answered, Give me glory which abides for ever, and give me riches which will endure for ever; and as he did, who, being tempted with offers of money to desert his religion, gave this excellent answer, Let not any think that he will embrace other men's goods to forsake Christ, who hath forsaken his own proper goods to follow Christ;[1] and as that martyr did, who, when he had riches and honours offered him, if he would recant,

[1] When Pyrrhus tempted Fabricius the first day with an elephant, so huge and monstrous a beast, as before he had not seen, and the next day with money and promises of honour, he answered, I fear not thy force, and I am too wise for thy fraud. If nature could do this, grace can do more. [Plutarch, *Pyrrhus*.—G.]

answered, Do but offer me somewhat that is better than my Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall see what I will say to you; and as Hormisda, a nobleman in the king of Persia's court, did,[1] who, because he would not deny Christ, he was put into ragged clothes, deprived of his honours, and set to keep the camels; after a long time, the king seeing him in that base condition, and remembering his former fortunes, he pitied him, and caused him to be brought into the palace, and to be clothed again like a nobleman, and then persuades and tempts him afresh to deny Christ, whereupon this noble spirit presently rended his silken clothes, saying, If for these you think to have me deny my faith, take them again; and so he was cast out with scorn a second time. And what was that that made the apostles temptation-proof, and that made those worthies temptation-proof, Heb. xi., and that made the primitive Christians temptation-proof, and that made the martyrs in queen Mary's days temptation-proof? Certainly, nothing more than this very consideration, that God was their portion. Ah! sinners, sinners, you will certainly fall, you will readily fall, you will easily fall, you will frequently fall, you will dreadfully fall before temptations, till you come to enjoy God for your portion. Every blast and every wind of temptation will overset and overturn that man that hath not God for his portion. Such a man may pray a thousand times over and over, 'Lord, lead me not into temptation,' and yet every day fall before the least temptation, as common experience doth abundantly evidence; whereas a man that hath God for his portion will stand fast like a rock in all storms, yea, in the face of all temptations he will be like mount Zion, that cannot be removed. Luther counsels every Christian to answer all temptations with this short saying, '*Christianus sum*,' I am a Christian;[2] and I would counsel every Christian to answer all temptations with this short saying, 'The Lord is my portion.' O Christian, when Satan or the world shall tempt thee with honours, answer, 'The Lord is my portion'; when they shall tempt thee with riches, answer, 'The Lord is my portion;' when they shall tempt thee with preferments, answer, 'The Lord is my portion;' and when they shall tempt thee with the favours of great ones, answer, 'The Lord is my portion;' yea, and when this persecuting world shall threaten thee with the loss of thy estate, answer, 'The Lord is my portion;' and when they shall threaten thee with the loss of thy liberty, answer, 'The Lord is my portion;' and when they shall threaten thee with the loss of friends, answer, 'The Lord is my portion;' and when they shall threaten thee with the loss of life, answer, 'The Lord is my portion.' O sirs! if Satan should come to you with an apple, as once he did to Eve, tell him that 'The Lord is your portion;' or with a grape, as once he did to Noah, tell him that 'The Lord is your portion;' or with a change of raiment, as once he did to Gehazi, tell him that 'The Lord is your portion;' or with a wedge of gold, as once he did to Achan, tell him that 'The Lord is your portion;' or with a bag of money, as once he did to Judas, tell him that 'The Lord is your portion;' or with a crown, a kingdom, as once he did to Moses, tell him that 'The Lord is your portion.' But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, If God be *not your portion, you will be miserable to all eternity.* If God be not your portion, wrath must be

[1] Clarke, as before, p. 60.—G.

[2] Luther in Genesim.

your portion, hell must be your portion, everlasting burnings must be your portion, a devouring fire must be your portion, and a separation for ever from the glorious presence of God, Christ, angels, and 'the spirits of just men made perfect,' must be your portion; as you may clearly see by comparing the Scriptures in the margin together.[1] If God be not your portion in this life, you shall never have him for your portion in another life; if God be not your portion here, he will never be your portion hereafter. O sirs! if death should surprise you before God is your portion, you will as certainly go to hell, as God is in heaven; and therefore it infinitely concerns you to get God for your portion. There is no way in the world to make the king of terrors to be a king of desires to thy soul, O man, but by gaining God for thy portion. Of all terribles, death will be most terrible and formidable to that man that hath not God for his portion. If thou shouldst live and die, O man, without having God for thy portion, it had been good for thee that thou hadst never been born; and if the day of thy birth had been the day of thy death, thy hell would not have been so hot as now thou wilt certainly find it.

But now, methinks, I hear some crying out, O sirs! what shall we do that we may have God for our portion? Oh, had we as many worlds at our dispose as there be stars in heaven, we would give them all that we might have God for our portion. Oh we now see that we can never be happy except God be our portion, yea, we now see that we shall be miserable to all eternity, except God be our portion; and therefore what shall we do that we may have God for our portion?

Well then, if you would indeed have God for your portion, let me thus advise you;—

[1.] First, *Labour to be very sensible, that by nature you are without God, yea, at enmity with God, and alienated from the life and love of God, and that by nature you are children of wrath and disobedience, and in actual arms and rebellion against the great God.*[2] O sirs, never talk of having of God for your portion, till you come to see yourselves without God, and till you come to judge yourselves unworthy of God. Every man in his natural estate is afar off from God three manner of ways, Acts ii. 39.

First, In point of opinion and apprehension.

Secondly, In point of fellowship and communion.

Thirdly, In point of grace and conversion.

And till a man comes to be sensible of this, he will never desire God to be his portion. But,

[2.] Secondly, If you would have God for your portion, then *you must trample upon all other portions in comparison of God.*[3] Luther protested that God should not put him off with the poor things of this world. Oh, go to God, and say, Lord, thou hast given me a portion in money, but this money is not thyself; thou hast given me a portion in lands, but these lands are not thyself; thou hast given me a portion in goods, but these goods are not thyself; thou hast given me a portion

[1] Ps. xi. 6, ix. 17; Isa. xxxiii. 14; Mat. xxiv. 51; 2 Thes. i. 7–10; Heb. xii. 22–24.

[2] Eph. ii. 12; Rom. viii. 7; Eph. ii. 1, 2, iv. 18.

[3] Austin prays, Lord, saith he, whatever thou hast given, take it all away, only give me thyself.

in jewels, but these jewels are not thyself; and therefore give me thyself, and I shall say I have enough. Lord, had I all the world for my portion, yet I should be miserable for ever in that other world, except thou bestowest thyself as a portion upon my soul. O Lord, give me but thyself, and take away what thou pleasest. Oh give me but thyself, and take away all, strip me of all, and I shall with Job sit down and bless a taking God as well as a giving God. Oh go to God, and tell him, with an humble boldness, that though he hath given thee many good things, yet all those good things will do thee no good except he bestow himself upon thee as the only good. Oh tell him that he is the first good; tell him that he is the original of all good; tell him that he is the greatest good, the noblest good; tell him that he is a superlative good; tell him that he is an universal good; tell him that he is an unchangeable good; tell him that he is an eternal good; and tell him that he is the most soul-suitable and soul-satisfying good. And therefore tell him that thou canst not tell how to live one day without him; yea, that thou knowest not how to be happy one hour without him. But,

[3.] Thirdly, If you would have God for your portion, then *of all precious promises, of all golden promises, plead that most*, Zech. xiii. 9, 'They shall call upon my name, and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God.' O sirs! as ever you would have the great and glorious God for your portion, plead out this noble promise cordially with God; plead it out affectionately, plead it out fervently, plead it out frequently, plead it out believingly, plead it out resolutely, plead it out incessantly. O sirs! this choice promise is an hive full of heavenly honey, it is a paradise full of sweet flowers, it is a breast that is full of the milk of consolation; and therefore be still a-sucking at this breast, be still a-pleading of this promise; follow God with this promise early and late, follow him with this promise day and night, follow him with this promise as the importunate widow followed the unjust judge, Luke xviii. 1, and give him no rest till he hath made it good to your souls that he is your God, and that he is your portion, and that he is your salvation, and that he is your all in all. Oh tell him that above all things in this world your hearts are set on this, to have God to be your God, to have God to be your portion. Oh tell him that you cannot, tell him that you dare not, tell him that you may not, and tell him that you shall not, be satisfied with anything without God, with anything below God, with anything on this side God, with anything but God; and therefore humbly entreat him, and earnestly beseech him, to be your God, and to be your portion. But,

[4.] Fourthly, If you would have God for your portion, then *you must be willing to be his portion.*[1] God is resolved upon this, that he will be no man's portion that is not willing to be his. You must make a resignation of yourselves to God, if ever you would enjoy an interest in God; you must be as willing to be his people, as you are willing to have him to be your God; you must be as much at God's dispose as earthly portions are at your dispose, or else there will be no enjoying of God to be your God. God will engage himself to none that are not willing to engage themselves to him. He that will not give his hand and his heart to God, shall never have any part or portion in God. O sirs! as

[1] Deut. xxxii. 9; Jer. xii. 10; Zech. ii. 12.

ever you would have God for your portion, it highly concerns you to give up yourselves to God with highest estimations, and with most vigorous affections, and with utmost endeavours, according to that precious promise, Isa. xliv. 5, 'One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand to the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.' God stands upon nothing so much as the giving up of yourselves to him, nor is he taken with nothing so much as the giving up of yourselves to him. I have read of Æschines, who, seeing his fellow-scholars give great gifts, viz. gold, silver, and jewels, to his master Socrates, and he being poor, and having nothing else to bestow, he gave himself, which the philosopher most kindly accepted, esteeming this present above all those rich and costly presents that his scholars had presented to him, and accordingly in love and sweetness he carried it toward him.[1] So there is nothing that God accepts, loves, likes, and esteems, like the giving up of a man's self unto him. This is a present that God prefers above all the gold, silver, and sparkling jewels in the world. Well, sirs, remember this, such as are not as willing to say, Lord, we are thine, as they are to say, Lord, thou art ours, such shall never have God for their portion. But,

[5.] Fifthly, If you would have God for your portions, then *you must take up Christ in your arms, and treat with God upon the credit of Christ.* There is no acquaintance with God, there is no reconciliation to God, there is no union nor communion with God, there is no readmission into the presence and favour of God, without a mediator.[2] God out of Christ is incomprehensible, God out of Christ is exceeding terrible, an absolute God is a consuming fire, Heb. xii. 9; and therefore says Luther, *Nolo Deum absolutum*, let me have nothing to do with God himself. The blood of Christ, the blood of the covenant, is that, and only that, that can cement, reunite, and knit God and man together. Themistocles, understanding that king Admetus was highly displeased with him, took up his young son into his arms, and treated with the father, holding that his darling in his bosom, and thereby appeased the king's wrath.[3] O sirs! the King of kings is offended with you, and upon the account of your sins he hath a very great controversy with you. Now, there is no way under heaven to pacify his wrath, and turn away his displeasure from you, but by taking up Christ in your arms, and by presenting all your suits in his name. There is no angel in heaven, nor no saint on earth, that can, or that dares, to interpose between an angry God and poor sinners. It is only Christ, the prince of peace, that can make up a sinner's peace with God, Isa. ix. 6. John xiv. 6, 'Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.' There is no way to the Father but by the meritorious blood of the Son; there are none that can stand between everlasting burnings and us but Christ, Isa. xxxiii. 14. 'You shall not see my face except you bring your brother Benjamin with you,' said Joseph to his brethren, Gen. xliii. 3, 5. So says God, Sinners, sinners, you shall not see my face except you bring Jesus with you, except you bring Christ in your arms; you shall never see my face with joy, you shall never see my face and live. There is a writ of vengeance

[1] Seneca, *de Benefic.* lib. i.
[2] Eph. ii. 16; Heb. ii. 17; Col. i. 20; Eph. i. 6, 7.
[3] Plutarch *in Themistocles.*

that is issued out of the court of heaven against poor sinners, and except Christ steps in, they will certainly fall under an eternal arrest, and be thrown into everlasting perdition and destruction. But,

[6.] Sixthly, If you would have God for your portion, then *you must break your league with sin.* You must fall out with sin, if ever you fall in with God. Sin and you must be two, or God and you can never be one. There is no propriety to be had in God, except your hearts rise against that which first disunited and disjointed you from God. Sin and you must part, or God and you can never meet. You shall as soon make an accommodation between light and darkness, heaven and hell, noon and midnight, 2 Cor. vi. 14–18, as ever you shall be able to make an accommodation between God and sin. So long as sin remains ours, God will be none of ours. No prince will be one with that subject that lives in the practice of treason and rebellion against him.[1] No prince will be one with him that hath killed his only son and heir, and that daringly continues to hold up those bloody weapons in his hands wherewith he hath committed that horrid fact. There is no adulteress that can be so shamelessly impudent, or so vainly confident, as to desire pardon of her jealous husband, or to expect an oneness and a sweetness with him, whilst she continues to hold her wanton lovers still in her arms, and is fully resolved to hold on in her wanton dalliances as in times past. O sirs! God is that prince that will never admit of peace or union with you till you cease practising of treason against him, and till you come to lay down your weapons of rebellion at his feet; he is that jealous husband that will never take you into an oneness, into a nearness and dearness with himself, till you come to abandon all your wanton lovers, and thoroughly to resolve against all wanton dalliances for time to come. If ever you would have God for your portion, you must say to all your wanton lovers, and to all those idols of jealousy that you have set up in your souls, as Ephraim once said to his, 'Get you hence, for what have I any more to do with you?' Hosea xiv. 8. But,

[7.] Seventhly and lastly, If you would have God for your portion, then *you must wait upon him in the use of all holy means.*[2] In the use of holy means, God makes the clearest, the fullest, and the choicest discoveries of himself; in the use of holy means, poor sinners come to be acquainted with the excellency of God, and with the necessity of having God for their portion; in the use of holy means, poor sinners come to understand the fulness of God, the goodness of God, the graciousness of God, the sweetness of God, and the wonderful freeness, readiness, and willingness of God to give himself as a portion to all such as see their need of him, and that are heartily willing to receive him as their God and portion; and in the use of holy means God works in poor sinners a readiness, a forwardness, and a blessed willingness to choose God for their portion, to close with God for their portion, to embrace

[1] Pharnaces sent a crown to Cæsar at the same time that he rebelled against him, but he returned the crown and this message back: *Faceret imperata prius*, let him return to his obedience first. [Plutarch, *Cæsar;* Suetonius, *Jul.* See our Index under Pharnaces for other references.—G.]

[2] In my former treatise I have spoken very largely about the use of holy means, especially in my last on 'Holiness,' and therefore a touch here must suffice. [The reference is to his 'Crown of Holiness,' Brooks's largest work, which forms Vol. iv. of our edition.—G.]

God for their portion, to accept of God for their portion, and to own God for their portion. If this question should be put to all the saints in heaven, viz., How God came to be their portion? they would all answer, By waiting upon him in the use of all those holy ways and means that he had appointed for that purpose; and if the same question were put to all the saints on earth that have God for their portion, they would all give the same answer. O sirs! as ever you would have God for your portion, it highly concerns you to wait patiently upon him in the use of all holy means. He that is in the use of holy means is in the way of obtaining God for his portion. But he that casts off the use of the means, he says in effect, I will not have God for my portion, I care not to have God for my portion; let me but have the world for my portion, and let who will take God for their portion.

To prevent mistakes, before I close up this direction, remember that by the use of holy means, I only mean such means that God himself hath appointed, commanded, instituted, and ordained. As for those means that are of men's inventing, devising, prescribing, commanding, and ordaining, a man may wait till doomsday in the use of them, before ever he will gain God for his portion; and therefore they are rather to be declined, yea, detested and abhorred, than any way to be owned, minded, or used by any that would have God for their portion. Look, as all the worshippers of Baal got nothing by all their wailing and crying out from morning to night, 'O Baal, hear us! O Baal, hear us!' 1 Kings xviii., so they that wait upon God in invented and devised worship will never get anything by all their waiting; no, though they should wait from morning to evening, and from evening to morning, and cut and lance themselves till the blood gush out, as those foolish worshippers of Baal did. And therefore, as ever you would have God for your portion, be sure that you wait upon him only in his own ways, and in the use of his own means. And thus I have done with the use and application of the point.

So that I have now nothing to do but these two things:

First, To answer a few objections that poor sinners are apt to make against their own souls, and against their enjoying of God for their portion; and,

Secondly, To lay down a few positions that may be of singular use to all such that have God for their portion. I shall begin with the objections.

Obj. 1. Methinks I hear some poor sinners ready to object and say, O sir! *you have pressed us by many motives to get God for our portion, and we stand convinced in some measure by what you have said, that God is a most excellent, transcendent, glorious portion; but we very much question whether ever God will bestow himself as a portion upon such great, such grievous, such notorious, and such infamous sinners as we are.*

Now to this objection, I shall return these answers.

[1.] First, *God is a free agent, and therefore he may give himself as a portion to whom he pleases.* Men may do with their own as they please, and so may God do with himself as he pleases. Look, as men may give earthly portions to whom they please, so God may give himself as a portion to what sinners he pleases. God is as free to bestow

himself upon the greatest of sinners, as he is to bestow himself upon the least of sinners. But,

[2.] Secondly, I answer, *That the Lord hath bestowed himself as a portion upon as great and as grievous sinners as you are*, Ps. lxviii. 18. Adam, you know, fell from the highest pinnacle of glory into the greatest gulf of misery, and yet God bestowed himself as a portion upon him, Gen. iii. 15. And Manasseh was a sinner of the greatest magnitude, 2 Kings xxi., his sins were of a scarlet dye, they reached as high as heaven, and they made his soul as black as hell; for witchcraft, sorcery, cruelty, idolatry, and blood, he was a nonsuch, 2 Chron. xxxiii.; he sold himself to work all manner of wickedness with greediness; he did more wickedly than the very heathen, whom the Lord abhorred; in all his actings he seemed to be the first-born of Satan's strength; and yet the Lord freely bestowed himself as a portion upon him: and so, Ezek. xvi. 6, 8, 'When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live. Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was a time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.' And so, Isa. xlvi. 12, 13, 'Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness: I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.' Solomon, Mary Magdalene, Matthew, Zaccheus, the jailor, and the murderers of Christ, were all very great and grievous sinners, and yet the Lord bestowed himself as a portion upon them; and so God bestowed himself as a portion upon those monstrous and prodigious sinners that are mentioned in 1 Cor. vi. 9–11, whose souls were red with guilt, and as black as hell with filth. God hath been very good to those that have been very bad; and therefore do not despair, O sinner, though thy sins are very great.

I have read a story concerning a great rebel,[1] that had made a great party against one of the Roman emperors, and proclamation being sent abroad, that whosoever could bring in the rebel, dead or alive, he should have a great sum of money for his reward; the rebel hearing of it, comes, and presenting himself before the emperor, demands the sum of money proposed: the emperor, bethinking himself, concludes, that if he should put him to death, all the world would be ready to say that he did it to save his money; and so he freely pardoned the rebel, and gave him the money. Here now was light in a dark lantern, here was rare mercy and pity in a very heathen. And shall an heathen do thus, and shall not the great God, who is made up of all loves, of all mercies, of all compassions, of all goodnesses, and of all sweetnesses, do much more? Certainly he will. If the greatest rebels, if the greatest sinners will but come in whilst the white flag of grace and mercy is held forth, they shall find a marvellous readiness and forwardness in God, not only to pardon them, but also to bestow, not only money, but himself as a portion upon them. The greatest sinners should do well

[1] Joh. Bodin. Com. weal. [that is, in his 'Livres de la Republique,' 1577, and afterwards in Latin 'De Republica.'—G.

to make that great Scripture their greatest companion: Ps. lxviii. 18, 'Thou hast ascended on high,' speaking of Christ, 'thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also.' But to what purpose hath Christ received gifts, spiritual gifts, gracious gifts, glorious gifts for men, for the rebellious? Why, it is 'that the Lord God may dwell amongst them.' But,

[3.] Thirdly, I answer, *That God hath given out an express promise, that he will make such to be his people which were not his people.* Hosea ii. 23, 'I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.' In this precious promise God hath engaged himself to have a most sweet harmony, and a most intimate conjunction and communion with such a people as were not his people. But,

[4.] Fourthly, I answer, *That God gains the greatest glory by bestowing of himself as a portion upon the greatest sinners.* There is nothing that makes so much for the glory of free grace, and for the exaltation of rich mercy, and for the praise of divine goodness, and for the honour of infinite fulness, as God's bestowing himself upon the greatest of sinners. O sirs! grace appears never so rich, nor never so excellent, nor never so glorious, as when it triumphs over the greatest sins, and when it falls upon the greatest sinners. Grace never shines, nor never sparkles, nor never becomes so exceeding glorious, as it doth when it lights upon the hearts of the greatest sinners. The greatest sins do most and best set off the freeness and the riches of God's grace. There is nothing that makes heaven and earth to ring and to sound out his praises, so much as the fixing of his love upon those that are most unlovely and uncomely, and as the bestowing of himself upon them that have given away themselves from him.

And it is further observable, that the greatest sinners, when once they are converted, do commonly prove the choicest saints, and the rarest instruments of promoting the honour and glory of God in the world. The Canaanites were a wicked and a cursed generation; they were of the race of cursed Ham; they were given over to all whoredom, witchcraft, and cruelty; they offered their sons and daughters to devils; they were the very worst of sinners; they were without God and without the covenant, and counted dogs among the Israelites; and such an one was the Canaanite woman, that you read of in that Mat. xv. 21–29, till the Lord made it the day of his power upon her soul; but when the Lord had brought her in to himself, ah, what a rare Christian did she prove, for wisdom, zeal, humility, self-denial, love, courage, patience, faith, &c. And so Mary Magdalene was a notorious strumpet, a common whore, among all the harlots none to Mary Magdalene,[1] and she was one out of whom Christ cast seven devils, Mark xvi. 9; and yet when she was changed and converted, oh, with what an inflamed love did she love the Lord Jesus Christ! and with what a burning zeal did she follow after the Lord Jesus! and how abundant was she in her lamenting and mourning after the Lord Jesus Christ! Some report, that after our Saviour's resurrection, she spent thirty years

[1] One cannot pass so very strong statements without remarking that there is not the slightest ground for them.—G.

in weeping for her sins in Galba. And Paul, you know, was a very grievous sinner, but after his conversion, oh what a rare, what an eminent, what a glorious instrument was he in bringing of souls to Christ, and of building up of souls in Christ! Oh what a noble drudge was he for Christ! Oh how frequent! Oh how fervent! Oh how abundant was he in the work of the Lord, &c. And indeed, in all ages, the greatest sinners, when once they have been converted, they have commonly proved the choicest saints, and the rarest instruments in the hand of God for the advancement of his glory, and the carrying on of his work in the world. I might instance in Luther, and divers others, but that I hasten to a close. And therefore,

[5.] Fifthly, I answer, that of all sinners *the greatest sinners do undoubtedly stand in the greatest need of having of God for their portion.*

Look, as they that are most wounded stand in most need of a surgeon, and as they that are most sick stand in most need of a physician, and as they that are in most danger of robbing stand in most need of assistance, and as they that are in most peril of drowning stand in most need of a boat, and as they that are most impoverished stand in most need of relief, so they that are the greatest sinners stand in most need of having God for their portion; for no tongue can express, nor no heart can conceive the greatness of that wrath, of that indignation, of that desolation, of that destruction, and of that damnation that attends and waits upon those great sinners that have not God for their portion, 2 Thes. ii. 7–9; and therefore the greater sinner thou art, the greater obligation lies upon thee to get God to be thy God and portion; for till that be done, all thy sins, in their full number, weight, guilt, and aggravating circumstances, will abide upon thy soul. But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, I answer, *that God is a great God, and he loves to do like himself.* Now, there are no works, no actions that are so suitable to God, and so pleasing to God, and so delightful to God, as those that are great; and what greater work, what greater action can the great God do, than to bestow himself as a portion upon the greatest of sinners? It was a great work for God to create the world, and it is a great work for God to govern the world, and it will be a great work for God to dissolve the world, and to raise the dead; and yet doubtless it is a greater work for the great God freely to bestow himself upon the greatest sinners. The love of God is a great love, and the mercies of God are great mercies, and the compassions of God are great compassions, and accordingly God loves to act; and therefore there is ground for the greatest sinners to hope that the Lord may bestow himself as a portion upon them. But,

Obj. 2. Secondly, Others may object and say, *Hereafter we will look after this portion; for the present we are for living in the world, we are for a portion in hand, we are for laying up portions for ourselves, and providing portions for our posterity.* We are first for laying up of earthly treasures, and when we have done that work to purpose, then we will do what we can to obtain this excellent and glorious portion that you have been so long a-discoursing on, &c. Now, to this objection I shall thus answer,

[1.] First, Thus to act is *to run counter-cross to Christ's express*

commands: Mat. vi. 33, 'But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you';[1] and so ver. 19, 20, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.' And so in that John vi. 27, 'Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for the meat which endureth for everlasting life.' O sirs! to act or run cross to God's express commands, though under pretence of revelation from God, is as much as a man's life is worth, as you may see in that sad story, 1 Kings xiii. 24. O sirs! it is a dangerous thing to neglect one of his commands, who by another is able to command your bodies into the grave, and your souls into hell at his pleasure. Shall the wife make conscience of obeying the commands of her husband? and shall a child make conscience of obeying the commands of his father? and shall the servant make conscience of obeying the commands of his Lord? and shall the soldier make conscience of obeying the commands of his general? and shall the subject make conscience of obeying the commands of his prince, though he be none of his council? and will not you make conscience of obeying his commands that is the prince of the kings of the earth? Rev. i. 5. But,

[2.] Secondly, *Who but children, madmen, and fools in folio, will pitch upon a less good, when a greater good is offered to them?* What madness and folly is it for men to pitch upon bags of counters, when bags of gold are laid before them! or for men to choose an hundred pounds *per annum* for life, when rich inheritances and great lordships are freely offered to be made over to them for ever?[2] What were this but, Esau-like, to prefer a mess of pottage before the birthright? and yet this is the present case of these objectors. God is that rich, that great, that glorious, and that matchless portion that is held out, and freely offered and tendered in the gospel to poor sinners, and they neglect, slight, and reject this blessed offer, and fix their choice, their love, their hearts, their affections, upon the perishing vanities of this world. Oh the folly of such, that at a feast feed upon kickshaws, and never taste of those substantial dishes that are for nourishment! Oh the madness of such that prefer the flesh-pots of Egypt before the dainties of Canaan! Would not such a merchant, such a tradesman be pointed at, as he goes along the streets, for a fool or a madman, that should neglect such a season, such an opportunity, such an advantage, wherein he may be made for ever, as to the world, and all because he is resolved first to secure such a bargain of rags, or such a bargain of old shoes, which will turn out but little to his advantage when he hath bought them? Surely yes. Now this is the very case of the objectors, for they neglect the present seasons, the present opportunities of grace and mercy, and of being made happy for ever, by enjoying of God for their portion, and all because they are resolved first to secure the treasures, the rags of this world. Certainly, in the great day of account, these will be found the greatest fools that have fooled away such golden opportunities, that

[1] The Greek word προστεθήσεται signifies a casting in as an overplus, as some overweight, measure, or number.

[2] Children, madmen, and fools, will part with a pearl for a pippin.

were more worth than all the world, and all to secure the rags of the world. But,

[3.] Thirdly and lastly, *How many thousands are now in hell! How many thousands have now their part and their portion in that burning lake, which burns with fire and brimstone for ever and ever! Who thought when they were on earth, that after they had laid up goods for many years with the fool in the Gospel, that then they would look after heavenly treasures, and secure God for their portion; but before they could find time or hearts to set about so noble a work, divine vengeance hath overtaken them, and justice hath cut the thread of their lives, and given them their portion among hypocrites,* Mat. vii. 22, 26, 27, Rev. xxi. 8. Ah! how many be there that have died in the time of their earthly projects and designs, before ever they have set about that great work of securing God for their portion, Luke xii. 15, 22; and how many thousands be there, that God in his just judgment hath given up to insatiable desires of earthly things, Philip. iii. 18, 19, and to a cursed endless covetousness all their days! Some write of the crocodile, that it always grows, that it hath never done growing; and just so it is with the desires of worldly men, they always grow, they have never done growing. Now they are for one thousand, then for ten, then for twenty, then for forty, then for an hundred thousand; now they are for this lordship, and then they are for that; now they are for this good bargain, and then they are for that; their hearts grow every day fuller and fuller with new desires of further and greater measures of earthly things; they please themselves with golden dreams, till they awake with everlasting flames about their ears, and then they fall a-cursing themselves that they have made gold their confidence, and that they have neglected those golden seasons and opportunities wherein they might have secured God for their portion. But,

Obj. 3. Thirdly, Others may object and say, *We would fain have God for our portion, and we would willingly apply ourselves to all those ways and means whereby we might obtain the Lord to be our portion; but we are poor unworthy wretches.* Surely the Lord will never bestow himself as a portion upon such miserable unworthy ones as we are! We are worthy of death, we are worthy of wrath, we are worthy of hell, we are worthy of damnation, but we are no ways worthy of having God for our portion. Did ever the Lord cast an eye of love upon such unlovely and such unworthy sinners, lepers as we are? &c.

Now to this objection I shall return these answers:

[1.] First, *Though you have no merits, yet God is rich and abundant in mercy.*[1] Your sins, your unworthiness can but reach as high as heaven, but the mercies of God reach above the heavens: Ps. ciii. 11, 'For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.' Ps. cviii. 4, 'For thy mercy is great above the heavens, and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds.' The highest comparisons which the world will afford are not sufficient to express the greatness of God's mercy to poor sinners. Though the heavens are exceeding high above the earth, yet the mercies of God to his poor people are above the heavens. But,

[2.] Secondly, I answer, *that the Lord hath never bestowed himself*

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 15; 1 Tim. i. 14; 1 Peter i. 3.

as a portion upon any yet but unworthy ones. David was as unworthy as Saul, and Job as Joab, and Peter as Judas, and Paul as Simon Magus; and the publicans and harlots that entered into the kingdom of heaven were as unworthy as the publicans and harlots that were shut out of the kingdom of heaven, Mat. xxi. 31, 32; and the thief that went to paradise was as unworthy as the thief that went to hell. All the saints in heaven, and all the saints on earth, are ready with one joint consent to declare that they were as unworthy as the most unworthiest, when God first bestowed himself as a portion upon them. This objection, I am unworthy, is a very unworthy objection, and therefore away with it. But,

[3.] Thirdly, I answer, *That God hath nowhere in all the Scripture required any personal worthiness to be in the creature, before he will bestow himself upon the creature.* O sirs! it never came into the thoughts of God, it never entered into the heart of God, to require of men that they should be first worthy of his love before they should enjoy his love, and that they should be first worthy of his mercy before they should taste of his mercy, and that they should be first worthy of his goodness before they should be partakers of his goodness, and that they should be first worthy of himself, before he would bestow himself as a portion upon them. If we should never enjoy God for our portion till we are worthy to enjoy him for our portion, we should never enjoy him. If a man had as many eyes as Argus to search into the Scripture, and as many hands as Briareus to turn over the leaves of Scripture, yet he would never be able to find out one text, one line, yea, one word, wherein God requires a personal worthiness in the creature before he gives away himself to the creature. Should God stand upon a personal worthiness to be in the creature before he would look upon the creature, or before he would let out his love to the creature, or before he would extend mercy or pity to the creature, or before he would, in a covenant of free grace, give himself to the creature, no sinner could be saved; man would be for ever undone, and it had been good for him that he had never been born. But,

[4.] Fourthly, I answer, *it is not men's unworthiness, but men's unwillingness, that hinders them from having God to be their portion.* Though most men pretend their unworthiness, yet there is in them a secret unwillingness to have God for their God. When they look upon God as a gracious God, then they are willing to have him to be their God; but when they look upon God as an holy God, then their hearts fly back. When they look upon God as a merciful God, and as a bountiful God, oh then they wish that he were their God; but when they look upon God as a commanding God, and as a ruling and an overruling God, oh then their hearts do secretly rise against God. There is a real unwillingness in the hearts of sinners in all respects to close with God, and to have God to be their God: 'Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' Isa. liii. 1; 'I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts. A people that provoke me to anger continually to my face,' Isa. lxv. 2, 3; 'How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at

my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded: but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh,' &c. Prov. i. 22–26; 'For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, In returning and rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength, and ye would not,' Isa. xxx. 15. O sirs! men shall be damned at last, not for *cannots*, but for *will nots*, Mat. xxiii. 37. No man shall be damned because he could not do better, but because he would not do better, Luke xiii. 34. If there were no will, there would be no hell. At last sinners will find this to be their greatest hell, that they have wilfully destroyed themselves. This is that which will damn with a witness, and this will be that never-dying worm: I might have had Christ and grace, but I would not; I might have been sanctified and saved, but I would not; I might have been holy and happy, but I would not; life and death hath been often set before me, and I have chosen death rather than life, Deut. xxx. 15, 19; heaven and hell hath been often set before me, and I have chosen hell rather than heaven; glory and misery hath been often set before me, and I have chosen misery rather than glory; and therefore it is but just that I should be miserable to all eternity. No man, no devil, can undo thee, O sinner, without thyself; no man can be undone in both worlds but by himself; no man shall be damned for his unworthiness, but for his unwillingness; and therefore never plead this objection more. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, I answer, *that if you will not seek after the Lord to be your portion till you are worthy to enjoy him as your portion, then you will never seek after him, then you will never enjoy him for your God and portion.* Personal worthiness is no flower that grows in nature's garden. No man is born with a worthiness in his heart, as he is born with a tongue in his mouth. It is not the full, but the empty; it is not the rich, but the poor in spirit; it is not the righteous, but the sinner; it is not the worthy, but the unworthy soul, that is the proper object of mercy and pity. The poor publican that cried out, 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner,' Luke xviii. 10–15, went home justified, when the thank-God pharisee returned as proud as he came. The centurion, when he came to Christ, sped well, notwithstanding his personal unworthiness, Mat. viii. 5–13. And the prodigal son sped well when he returned to his father, notwithstanding his personal unworthiness; for he was readily accepted, greatly pitied, sweetly embraced, courteously received, and very joyfully and nobly entertained. Witness the best robe that was put upon his back, and the gold ring that was put on his finger, and the shoes that were put on his feet, and the fatted calf that was killed to make the company merry, Luke xv. 11–32. O sirs! if in the face of all your unworthiness you will go to God, and tell him that you are sinners, that you are vile sinners, that you are wretched sinners, that you are very great sinners, yea, that you are the greatest of sinners, and that you have deserved a thousand deaths, a thousand hells, a thousand destructions, and a thousand damnations, and earnestly beseech him to look upon you, and to bestow himself upon you, though

not for your worthiness's sake, yet for his name's sake, for his mercy's sake, for his promise's sake, for his covenant's sake, for his oath's sake, and for his Son's sake. Certainly if you shall thus plead with God, all the angels in heaven, and all the men on earth, cannot tell to the contrary, but that you may speed as well as ever the centurion or the prodigal did. I have taken the more pains to answer this objection, that so it may never have a resurrection more in any of your hearts into whose hands this treatise may fall.

I know other objections might be raised, but because I have spoken largely so much in my former writings, I shall pass on to the last thing proposed, and that is, to lay down some positions that may, by the blessing of God, be of singular use to the Christian reader.

First Position. As, first, *That it is one thing for a man to have God for his portion, and it is another thing for a man to have an assurance in his own soul that God is his portion.*[1] There are many that have God for their portion who yet are full of fears and doubts that God is not their portion. Thus it was with Asaph in that 77th psalm, and thus it was with Heman in that 88th psalm, and thus it is with very many Christians in these days. Sometimes God exercises his children with such changeable and such terrible dispensations, as raises many fears and doubts in them about their interest and propriety in God. And sometimes their secret indulging of some bosom idol, their entertainment of some predominant lust, raises strange fears and jealousies in their souls about their interest in God. And sometimes their not closing with the Lord so closely, so fully, so faithfully, so universally, and so sincerely as they should, without any secret reservation, raises many doubts and questions in them whether God be their portion or no. The graces of many Christians are so weak, and their corruptions are so strong, and Satan is so busy with them, and their duties and performances are so weak, so flat, so dull, so sapless, so lifeless, so fruitless, and so inconstant, that they are ready at every turn to say, If God be our God, why is it thus with us? If God be our portion, why are our hearts in no better a frame? why have our duties no more spirit, life, and fire in them? Look, as the sun may shine, and yet I not see it; and as the husband may be in the house, and yet the wife not know it; and as the child may have a very great portion, a very fair estate settled upon him, and yet he not understand it; so a Christian may have God for his portion, and yet for the present he may not see it, nor know it, nor understand it: 1 John v. 13, 'These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.' These precious souls had God and Christ for their portion, and they did believe, and they had eternal life in the seeds and beginnings of it, and in the promise, and in Christ their head, who, as a public person, had taken possession of it in their steads, and yet they had not the assurance of these things in their own souls, Eph. ii. 6. Look, as the babe that hath passed the pangs of the first birth doth not presently cry out, My father, my father, so the babe of grace, the new-born Christian, doth not presently cry out, My God, my God. It is one mercy for God to be my

[1] Moses his face did shine, and yet he did not see it.

God, and it is another mercy for God to tell me that he is my God; it is one act of grace for God to be my portion, and it is another act of grace for God to tell me that he is my portion. Look, as fire may be hid under ashes for a time, and as bits of gold may be hid in an heap of dust for a time, and as stars may be hid in a dark night for a time, and as a pearl may be hid in a puddle for a time, so God may be a man's portion, and yet this may be hid from him for a time.

Second Position. The second position is this, *That it is one thing for a man to have God for his portion, and another thing for a man clearly and convincingly to make it out to himself or others, that God is his portion.* Doubtless there are many thousands that have God for their portion, who yet, if you would give them a thousand worlds, are not able to make it out to their own or others' satisfaction, that God is their portion.[1] Most Christians attain to but small measures of grace. Now small things, little things are hardly discerned, they are hardly made out. A little faith is next to no faith, and a little love is next to no love, and a little repentance is next to no repentance, and a little zeal is next to no zeal, and a little hope is next to no hope, and a little holiness is next to no holiness, and a little communion with God is next to no communion with God, and a little conformity to God is next to no conformity to God. Now where there is but a little grace, there it is very difficult for a man to make out the truth of his grace, and so by consequence to make out the truth of his interest and propriety in the God of grace. It is not grace in truth, but grace in strength that will enable a man to make it out to himself, and to make it out to others, that God is his portion. It is not grace in its sincerity, but grace in its sublimary, in its high and eminent actings, that will enable a man to make it out to himself and others, that God is indeed his God. Besides, many precious hearts have such weak heads, and such bad logic, and such shallow natural parts, that they are not able rationally nor divinely to argue the case with their own souls, nor to make an improvement of those rules, helps, ways, and means, whereby they might be enabled to make it out to themselves and others, that God is their portion. Look, as many persons have often a good title to such and such lands, and to such and such estates and inheritances, though they are not able for the present to clear up their title either to themselves or others; so many of the dear children of God have a good title to God, and a real interest and propriety in God, and yet for the present they are not able to clear up their title to God, nor to clear up their interest and propriety in God, either to themselves or others. And this is so great a truth, that all the faithful ministers of Jesus Christ that deal with poor souls, and that are conversant about souls, are ready from their daily experience to avouch it before all the world. He that shall say, that such have not God for their portion, will certainly condemn the generation of the just.

Third Position. The third position is this, *That where there is an hearty willingness in any man to accept of God to be his God, to own*

[1] God sometimes lays such a law of restraint upon the noble faculties of men and women, that they cannot use them at some times as they do at others, as you may clearly see by comparing of these scriptures together, Luke xxiv. 14–16, &c.; Acts xxii. 9; Gen. xxi. 16, 19; John xx. 14, 15, &c.

God for his God, and to close with God as his God, there God is certainly that man's God, Isa. lv. 1, 2, John vii. 37, 38. If there be a cordial willingness in you to take God to be your God, then without all peradventure God is your God. A sincere willingness to accept of God to be your God is accepted of God, and is sufficient to enter into a gracious covenant with God. O sirs! a sincere willingness to accept of God to be your God, flows from nothing below the good will and pleasure of God. No power below that glorious power that made the world, and that raised Christ from the grave, is able to raise a sincere, an hearty willingness in man to accept of God to be his God, and to take God for his God: Ps. cx. 3, 'Thy people shall be willing,' or willingnesses, in the abstract and in the plural number, 'in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness.' There is no power below the power of the Lord of hosts, that can raise up a willingness in the hearts of sinners. It is not in the power of all the angels in heaven, nor of all the men on earth, to beget a sincere willingness in the heart of man to accept of God to be his God. This is work that can only be effected by an omnipotent hand. Though an emperor may force a woman to marry him that is his slave, because she is his purchase, yet he cannot by all his power force her will; he may force her body to the action, but he cannot force her will to the action. The will is always free, and cannot be forced. But God is that great emperor that hath not only a power to marry the soul, which he hath redeemed from being Satan's bond-slave, but also a power to make the soul that is unready ready, and that is unwilling willing, to marry him, and to bestow itself freely upon him. If there be in thee, O man, O woman, a sincere willingness to take God upon his own terms to be thy God, that is, to take him as an holy God, and as a ruling God, and as a commanding God, in one thing as well as another, then he is certainly thy God: Rev. xxii. 17, 'And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.'

Fourth Position. The fourth position is this, *That it may so fall out, that such a Christian that hath God for his portion, that hath an interest and a propriety in God, may lose the sight, the sense, the feeling and the evidence of his interest and propriety in God;* and this is evident by comparing the scriptures in the margin together.[1] Doubtless it is very rare to find a Christian that hath had the knowledge, and experience, and evidence of his interest and propriety in God, but that Christian also hath experienced what it is to have his interest and propriety in God clouded and darkened. Such Christians that have experienced what the warm beams of the Sun of righteousness means, have likewise experienced what it is to have their sun set in a cloud; and this truth I might make good, by producing of a cloud of witnesses, both from among the martyrs and from among the saints of all ages. But what do I talk of a cloud of witnesses, when the tears that daily drop from many of your eyes, and the sad complaints, and sighs, and groans of many of your souls, do sufficiently evidence this

[1] Ps. xxx. 6, 7; Ps. li. 13; Job xvi. 9, xix. 10; and 2 Chron. xxx. 20; Ps. lxxvii. 6 Ps. lxxxviii. 6; Isa. viii. 17; Lam. iii. 18.

sad truth. And therefore let no man conclude that God is not his God, because he hath lost the sight and sense of his interest and propriety in God; let no man say, that God is not his portion, because he hath lost those evidences, at the present, by which he hath formerly proved God to be his portion. Though a man should lose his writings and evidences that he hath to shew for such or such an estate, yet his writings and evidences being enrolled in a court of record, his estate remains good, and his title is still good in law; and therefore there is no reason why such a man should sit down, and wring his hands, and cry out, I am undone, I am undone; so though a Christian should lose his writings, his evidences that once he had to shew, that once he had to prove God to be his God and portion, and that he had a real interest and propriety in God, yet his writings, his evidences being enrolled in the court of heaven, his title to God, his interest in God remains good; and therefore there is no reason why such a person should sit down dejected, and wring his hands, and cry out, Oh I am undone, I am for ever undone.

Fifth Position. The fifth position is this, *That such that have not, for the present, God for their portion, ought not peremptorily to conclude that they shall never have God for their portion.* Such a person that cannot yet truly say that the Lord is his portion, ought not to despair of ever having of God for his portion. The time of a man's life is but a day, and God may bestow himself as a portion upon man in what hour of that day he pleases. In the parable, he bestowed himself as a portion upon some at the first hour, upon others at the third hour, upon others at the sixth hour, upon others at the ninth hour, and upon others at the eleventh hour, Mat. xx. 1–17. God is a free agent, and may bestow himself upon whom he pleases, and as he pleases, and when he pleases. There is no sinner, no, not the greatest sinner living under the gospel, that can infallibly determine that God will never be his God.[1] No sinner can conclude that God hath peremptorily and absolutely excluded him from mercy, and shut him out among those that he is resolved never to bestow himself upon. For,

1. God never made any sinner one of his privy council.
2. In the gospel of grace God hath revealed no such thing.
3. Secret things belong only to the Lord, Deut. xxix. 29.
4. God hath bestowed himself as a portion upon as great sinners as any they are that yet have not God for their portion.
5. All the angels in heaven, and all the men on earth, cannot tell to the contrary, but that God may have thoughts of mercy towards thee, and that thy lot may fall within the purpose of his grace, and that he may bestow himself as a portion upon thee before thou art cut off from the land of the living. Although a sinner may certainly know at the present that God is not his God, that God is not his portion, yet he doth not certainly know that God will never be his God, that God will never be his portion; and therefore no sinner may peremptorily conclude that God will never be his God, because for the present he cannot, he dares not say he is his God.

God gave himself as a portion to Abraham when he was old, when he was a white-headed sinner, Gen. xii. 4. And Manasseh was old

[1] We except such that hath committed the sin against the Holy Ghost.

when he was converted and changed, and when God bestowed himself upon him, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 1, 12–14. And Zaccheus and Nicodemus were called and converted in their old age. When there were but a few steps between them and the grave, between them and eternity, between them and everlasting burnings, then the Lord graciously revealed himself, and bestowed himself as a portion upon them. And if we believe Tertullian,[1] Paul wanted not a prediction of the Holy Ghost in that prophetic blessing of dying Jacob to his youngest son: Gen. xlix. 27, 'Benjamin shall raven as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.' Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin, in the morning, the fore part of his age, worrying and devouring the flock of Christ, persecuting of the church; and in the evening, the declension of his life, dividing the word, a doctor of the nations.[2] And Dionysius tells us that Mary Magdalene, that was so loose and dissolute in her youth, being converted in her old age, she sequestered herself from all worldly pleasures, and lived a most solitary life in the mountains of Gallia, where she spent full thirty years in meditation, fasting, and prayer. And old godly Similes said that he had been in the world sixty years, but had lived but seven, counting his life, not from his first birth, but from his new birth. And Augustine repented that he had begun to seek, serve, and love God no sooner.[3] By all these instances it is most evident that God may bestow himself as a portion upon sinners, upon very great sinners, yea, upon the greatest of sinners, and that at last cast, when they are stricken in years, and when they are even ready to go out of this world; and therefore let no man despair of having of God for his portion, though for the present his soul cannot say, The Lord is my portion.

O sirs! despair is a sin, a very heinous sin, yea, it is that sin that damns with a witness. Despairing Judas perished and was damned, whenas the very murderers of Christ, believing on Christ, were saved.[4] Acts ii. Despair thrusts God from his mercy-seat; it throws disgrace upon the throne of grace; it gives the lie to all the precious promises; it casts reproach upon the nature of God; it tramples under feet the blood of the covenant; it cuts the throat of faith, hope, and repentance; it renders all the means of grace useless and fruitless; it embitters all a man's comforts; it gives a sting to all a man's troubles; it proclaims Satan a conqueror; it raises a hell in the conscience; it makes a man a *Magor-missabib*, a terror to himself and an astonishment to others. In that seventh of Daniel there is mention made of four beasts: the first a lion, the second a bear, the third a leopard, but the fourth, without distinction either of kind, or sex, or name, is said to be very fearful, and terrible, and strong; and such a thing as this fourth beast was is desperation, as all have found that ever have been under it. Desperation is a complicated sin; it is a mother sin; it is a breeding sin; it is the complement of all sins; and therefore above all take heed of this sin. O sirs! as you love your souls, and as you would be happy to all eternity, do not despair, nor do not be peremptory in your conclusions,

[1] Adv. Marcion. lib. v.

[2] See my 'Apples of Gold,' pp. 352–354, two more famous stories of such that were converted in their old age. [See Vol. I.—G.]

[3] Soliloq. cap. xxxiii.

[4] Roger bishop of Salisbury in King Stephen's days was so troubled that he could not live, and durst not die, &c.

that God will never be your portion, because for the present he is not your portion. Remember the gracious invitations of God, and remember the glorious riches of mercy, and remember the overflowings of infinite grace, and then despond and despair if thou canst.

Sixth Position. The sixth and last position is this, *That such is the love, care, goodness, and kindness of God to his people, that few or none of them die without some assurance that God is their portion, and that they have an interest and propriety in him.* That here and there a particular Christian, in cases not ordinary, may die doubting, and ascend to heaven in a cloud, as Christ did, Acts i. 9, will, I suppose, be readily granted; and that the generality of Christians shall, first or last, more or less, mediately or immediately, have some comfortable assurance, that God is their God, and that he is their portion, and that they have a real interest and propriety in him, may I suppose be thus evinced.

[1.] First, *Several precious promises that are scattered up and down the Scripture seems to speak out such a thing as this is.* Take these for a taste: Ps. ix. 18, 'For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.' Ps. xxii. 26, 'The meek shall eat and be satisfied; they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.' Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'For the Lord God is a sun and a shield; the Lord will give grace and glory: and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' Hosea ii. 23, 'And I will have mercy upon her that hath not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.' Ps. v. 12, 'For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.' John xiv. 21, 23, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. If any man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.'[1]

[2.] Secondly, *The common experiences of the saints, both in the Old and New Testaments, doth evidence as much.* Solomon's Song ii. 16, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his;' chap. vi. 3, 'I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine;' and chap. vii. 10, 'I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me.' Isa. lxiii. 16, 'Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.' Isa. lxiv. 8, 9, 'But now, O Lord, thou art our Father: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people.' Jer. iii. 22, 23, 'Behold, we come unto thee: for thou art the Lord our God. Truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel.' Isa. xxv. 9, 'And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us.' I might produce a cloud of witnesses from among the patriarchs and prophets, further to evince this truth; but enough is as good as a feast.

And as the church of God in the Old Testament, so the church of God in the New Testament attained to the same assurance. The believers in Corinth were sealed, and had the earnest of the Spirit in

[1] Ponder upon that of Ezek. xxxiv. 30, 31.

their hearts: 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.' And chap. v. 1, 5, 'For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit.' And so the believing Ephesians had the like: Eph. i. 13, 'In whom, after ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.' And so chap. iv. 30, 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' And the believing Thessalonians had the same: 1 Thes. i. 4, 5, 'Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.' I might give you many particular instances out of the New Testament to confirm this truth, but these general instances are more convincing and satisfying.

[3.] Thirdly, *If God should not, first or last, sooner or later, mediately or immediately, give his people some comfortable assurance that he is their portion, and that they have a real interest and propriety in him, the spirits, the souls of his people would certainly faint and fail; but this God will never suffer, this God by promise hath engaged himself to prevent, as you may see in that* Isa. lvii. 16, 18, 19, 'For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord, and I will heal him.' Now, seeing that God hath so graciously undertaken for his people, that their spirits shall not faint nor fail, there is no doubt but that, sooner or later, more or less, God will assure his people that he is their portion, and that they have a real interest and propriety in him.

[4.] Fourthly, *The Lord's supper is a sealing ordinance, and was ordained, instituted, and appointed for that very purpose and to that very end*, viz., to seal up the believer's propriety in God, and to assure him of his interest in God, in Christ, in the everlasting covenant, and in all the benefits of Christ's death, to wit, the favour of God, reconciliation, redemption, and the remission of sins.[1] Now, how can it possibly be imagined, that so glorious an ordinance should be instituted to so great and so glorious an end as to assure believers of their interest and propriety in God, and yet this end should never be effected in them all their days, for whose sake the ordinance was instituted and appointed? Certainly God never appointed any ordinance to accomplish any end, but first or last that ordinance did accomplish that end for which it was appointed and instituted, Isa. lv. 10, 11, and xlv. 23. Cyprian shews how the martyrs in the primitive church, when they were to appear before the cruel persecuting tyrants, were wont to receive the Lord's supper, and thereby they were so assured of their interest and propriety in God, and so fired with zeal and fervour, and filled with faith and fortitude, &c., that they made nothing of the greatest torments

[1] Mat. xxvi. 26–28; 1 Cor. xi. 23, 24; Rom. iv. 11.

that those bloody tyrants could inflict upon them.[1] And saith Chrysostom, by the sacrament of the Lord's supper we are so armed against Satan's temptations, that he fleeth from us, as if we were so many lions that spat fire.

The Jews in the celebration of the passover did sing the 113th Psalm, with the five following Psalms, which they called the great *Hallelujah*, and it was always after that cup of wine, which they called the cup of praise; and thus it should be with the saints. At all times, upon all occasions, in all places, they should sing *Hallelujahs* to God. Oh, but when they are at the Lord's supper, then they should sing the great Hallelujah; but how they will be ever able to sing this great Hallelujah, except first or last, more or less, God gives them some assurance of their interest and propriety in himself, I cannot for my life discern. But,

[5.] Fifthly, *There is in all believers the choice and precious springs of assurance*, as

(1.) *Union and communion with the Father and Son:* 1 John i. 3, 'That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' Now, that union that is between the foundation and the building, the head and the members, the husband and the wife, the father and the child, the subject and the prince, the body and the soul, is nothing so near an union as that which is between a believer and God. Besides, that union that a Christian hath with God is an honourable union, and it is an inseparable union, it is an invincible union, and it is an everlasting union, 1 Cor. vi. 16, 17. Now, how is it possible for a man to have such a near and such a glorious union and fellowship with God from the day of his conversion to the day of his dissolution, and yet never come to any assurance of his interest and propriety in God, is a thing not easily imaginable.

(2.) *Precious faith* is another spring of assurance: 1 Peter i. 8, 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' Now, this spring is in all the saints, 2 Peter i. 1. The faith of expectance will in time rise up into a faith of reliance, and the faith of reliance will in time advance itself into a faith of assurance.

(3.) *Hope* is another spring of assurance: Col. i. 27, 'Christ in you, the hope of glory;' Heb. vi. 19, 'Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.'

(4.) A *good conscience* is another spring of assurance, 2 Cor. i. 12.

(5.) Real *love to the saints* is another spring of assurance, 1 John iii. 14.

(6.) And lastly, *the Spirit of God* is another spring of assurance, Rom. chap. 8th. Now, that a Christian should have all these choice springs of assurance in his soul, from his new birth to the day of his death, and yet in all that time never come to assurance of his interest and propriety in God, is a thing, I had almost said, beyond all belief. But,

[1] Cyprian, lib. iv. Ep. vi. The same Augustine reports.—*Aug. in John* tract 27.

[6.] Sixthly, *There is nothing in all the world that the hearts of the saints are more frequently, more fervently, and more abundantly carried out after, in all their prayers and supplications, than this,* that God would tell them that he is their portion, and that he would clear up their interest and propriety in himself, Ps. iv. 6, 7. The constant language of their souls is this: Lord, do but tell us that thou art our portion, and then bestow earthly portions upon whom thou pleasest; do but clear up our interest and propriety in thyself, and then we shall say, 'Our lot is fallen in a pleasant place, and verily we have a goodly heritage,' Ps. xvi. 5, 6. Believers know that assurance that God is their portion, and that they have an interest and propriety in him, will ease them of all their sinful cares, fears, terrors, horrors, jealousies, suspicions, and sad apprehensions, which makes their lives a very hell. They know that assurance of their interest and propriety in God will make ever bitter sweet, and every sweet more sweet; it will turn a wilderness into a paradise, an Egypt into a Canaan. They know that assurance that God is theirs will raise the truest comforts, the purest comforts, the greatest comforts, the surest comforts, the strongest comforts, the rarest comforts, the sweetest comforts, and the most lasting comforts in their souls, Isa. xl. 1, 2. They know that assurance of their interest in God will fit them for the highest duties in Christianity, and for the hardest duties in Christianity, and for the costliest duties in Christianity, and for the most neglected, scorned, and despised duties in Christianity. They know that assurance of their propriety in God will most quicken their graces, and act their graces, and raise their graces, and strengthen their graces, and brighten their graces, and put a lustre and a beauty upon their graces. They know that assurance of their interest in God will wonderfully weaken sin, and effectually crucify their hearts to the world, and sweetly moderate their affections to their nearest and dearest relations, and powerfully arm them both against the world's oppositions and Satan's temptations.

To conclude; they know that assurance of their propriety in God will make death more desirable than terrible, yea, it will make the thoughts of death sweet, and the approaches of death easy, and all the warnings of death pleasant to their souls, and therefore they follow God hard day and night, with strong cries, prayers, tears, sighs, and groans, that he would make it evident to them that he is their portion, and that he would clear up their interest and propriety in him. Now, how can any man that is in his wits imagine that God should always turn a deaf ear to the prayers of his people in this thing especially, considering that their prayers, cries, tears, sighs, and groans are but the products of his own Spirit in them, Rom. viii. 26, 27; and considering likewise the several promises, whereby he hath engaged himself to answer to the prayers of his people? I might tire both you and myself in turning to those particular promises, but that I am resolved against, and therefore take that for all: John xvi. 23, 24, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.' This double asseveration, 'Verily, verily,' is never used but in matters of greatest weight and importance; and this gemination, 'Verily, verily,' is a vehement confirmation of the truth of what Christ speaks. Now, from

this gracious promise I may safely and clearly infer, that if God the Father will give to believers whatsoever they ask in the name of Christ, then certainly, at first or last, sooner or later, he will give them assurance that he is their portion, and that they have an undoubted interest and propriety in him; for this is one of the great requests that they are still a-putting up in the name of Christ, and upon the grant of this request depends the fulness of a Christian's joy. But,

[7.] Seventhly and lastly, *If God should not sooner or later, more or less, assure his people that he is their portion, and that they have an interest and a propriety in him; then he would be a very great loser, if I may so speak;* he would lose many praises, and many thanksgivings; he would lose much of that love, of that honour, and of that delight, and of that admiration, which otherwise he might have from among his children. And it is very observable, that of all the duties of religion there are none that are pressed so closely, so frequently, and so strongly upon Christians, as those of praising of God, and rejoicing in God, &c., as all know that know anything of the Scriptures.[1] Now, how it will stand with the holiness of God, and with the wisdom of God, and with the care of God, to be so great a loser in the very things which he hath so roundly and earnestly pressed upon his people, whenas by one sweet word of his mouth he might so easily and so happily prevent it, I cannot easily discern. All believers know that there is no such ready, no such effectual way under heaven to draw out their love, their joy, their delight, their praises, and their thanksgiving to God, as God's assuring of them that he is their portion, and that they have an unquestionable interest and propriety in him. Certainly that God that loves the praises of his people, and that delights in the rejoicings of his people, and that is so infinitely pleased with the thanksgivings of his people, that God will not always hide himself from his people, that God will sooner or later so manifest himself to his people, that they shall be able to see their interest and propriety in God, and rejoicing to say, 'The Lord is our portion.'

Now, oh you that are the people of the Lord, and that to this very day do lie under many fears and doubts about your interest and propriety in God, be not discouraged, do not hang down the head, do not despond, do not despair, for certainly sooner or later God will assure you that he is your portion, and that you have an interest and a propriety in him.

[1] I might produce above a hundred scriptures to evidence this.

THE PRIVY KEY OF HEAVEN.

NOTE.

The 'Privy Key of Heaven,' published during the awful Plague of London in '1665,' seems to have been less known than any of Brooks's writings. I have not been able to trace a reprint until a modern date. The original title-page is given below.*—G.

* THE

PRIVIE KEY

OF

HEAVEN;

OR,

Twenty Arguments for

CLOSET-PRAYER:

IN

A Select Discourse on that Subject: With the resolution of several considerable Questions; the main Objections also against Closet-Prayer, are here answered; Cautions propounded, and the Point improved; with several other things of no small importance, in respect of the internal and external welfare of the Christian Reader.

WITH

Twenty special Lessons (in the Epistle Dedicatory to some afflicted Friends) that we are to learn by that severe rod, the *PESTILENCE*, that now rageth in the midst of us.

By THOMAS BROOKS, Minister of the Gospel.

O my Dove that art in the clefts of the Rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voyce, and thy countenance is lovely, Cant. 2. 14.

LONDON, Printed for, and are to be sold by *John Hancock*, at the first shop in *Popes-head* Alley, next to *Cornhil*. 1665.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To my worthy and esteemed friends, Mrs Elizabeth Drinkwater, Mrs Susan Bell, Mrs Hannah Bourne, Mrs Mary Taylor, Mrs Anne White, Mrs Elizabeth Juxon, Mrs Rebeccah Juxon, Mrs Mary Baxter, Mrs Deborah Shepherd, Mrs Anne Clemens, Mrs Mary Stonior, Mrs Anne Snell, Mrs Anne Ellis, Mrs Margaret Cutler, Mrs Patience Cartwright, Mrs Mary Shaw, Mrs Philip Garret, Mrs Margaret Winfield, Mrs Hannah Pippet, Mrs Mary Chanlor, Mrs Mary Scot, Mrs Katherine Usher, with their husbands, &c., all happiness both here and hereafter.

HONOURED AND BELOVED IN OUR DEAR LORD JESUS,

I have crowded your names together in one epistle, not from any want of respect unto you, for I owe to each of you more than an epistle, nor because you are in one particular fellowship, for so you are not; but partly because the Lord hath made you one with himself, in the Son of his love; and partly because the Lord at several times, and in several ways, hath exercised you all in the furnace of affliction; and partly because this epistle may reach you all, and speak to you all, when I cannot, or when I may not, or which is more, when I am not.

Dear friends, many and great have been the breaches that the Lord hath made upon your persons, upon your near and dear relations, and upon your sweetest comforts and contentments. There is not one of you but may truly say with Job, 'He breaketh me with breach upon breach,' Job xvi. 14. God hath chastised you all round with various rods; and oh that the Lord would help you all to 'hear the rod, and him who hath appointed it,' Micah vi. 9.

Now that you may give me leave a little to open and apply to your particulars, that

Micah vi. 9, '*The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall hear thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.*'

The matter that I shall offer to your consideration from this scripture, will be not only of special concernment to yourselves, but also of high concernment to all sorts and ranks of men and women, in this sad day, when the sword devours on the one hand, and the pestilence rageth on the other hand.

'The Lord's voice crieth unto the city.' Tremellius turns it thus,

'The voice of the Lord doth preach unto this city, for what the matter is, thy name seeth: hear ye the rod,' &c. This city, viz., Jerusalem, and so consequently to all the Israelites; for in this city all offices and duties of godliness and humanity were more religiously performed, or to be performed, than in any other place, because of the presence and majesty of God that was amongst them. 'But thy Majesty seeth what wickedness is practised amongst them,' as is evident in the verses following.

'Crieth.' The word is from *kara*, which signifies,

First, 'To cry aloud,' or 'to make a noise,' Isa. lviii. 1; 'cry aloud' there is *kara*. The word signifies, to cry so loud as that all may hear that have ears to hear.

Secondly, The word signifies, 'openly to proclaim, preach, or publish a thing.' Exod. xxxiii. 19, 'I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee.' Here is the word *kara*.

Thirdly, The word signifies, 'to cry out.' Gen. xxxix. 15, 'I lifted up my voice and cried.' Here is *kara*. The Hebrew word קרא hath nine other significations in Scripture, but because they are not pertinent to what is in my eye, I shall pass them by at this time.

'And the man of wisdom shall see thy name.' *Vethushiia* properly signifies *essence;* and, therefore, according to the Hebrew, the words should be read thus, 'And the man of essence shall see thy name,' &c., that is, he that is a man indeed, he that is not a sot, a stock, a stone. Most men are men of folly, and so not worthy of the name of men; but as for such as are truly wise, they 'shall see thy name.' There is a great measure of spiritual art, of holy and heavenly wisdom required, both to enable a man to hear the voice of the rod and to understand the language of the rod. This wisdom is too high for a fool, Prov. xxiv. 7.

'Shall see thy name.' Now the Hebrew word here used יראה, may be better derived from *jare*, which signifies to *fear*, than from *raah*, that signifies to *see*, and so the words will run smoothly thus, 'The man of wisdom, or of essence, shall fear thy name,' considering that, it is majesty itself that crieth, and that he is immediately to deal with God himself, and not with a poor, weak, mortal worm.

'Hear ye the rod.' The word *hear* is from שמע *shamang*, which signifies,

First, 'To mark, observe, and attend to what is said.' Gen. xxix. 33, 'The Lord hath heard that I was hated;' that is, 'he hath marked it, he hath observed it.' So here, Oh mark the rod! Oh observe the rod! Oh attend to what is spoken by the rod!

Secondly, The word signifies, 'to understand what is spoken;' so Gen. xlii. 23, 'They knew not that Joseph understood them.' In the Hebrew it is, 'that Joseph heard them.' Now to hear the rod, is to understand what is spoken to us by the rod.

Thirdly, The word signifies, 'to believe a thing reported to be true;' so Exod. vi. 9, 'They hearkened not unto Moses,' that is, 'they did not believe the report that Moses made.' 'Hear the rod,' that is, 'believe the report the rod makes.' The rod reports, that of all evils sin is the greatest evil; and that of all bitters, sin is the greatest bitter. Oh believe the report of the rod! The rod reports, that God is angry, that God is displeased. Oh believe its report! The rod reports the crea-

tures to be mere vanity and vexation of spirit. Oh believe its report! The rod reports our nearest and dearest comforts, contentments, and enjoyments to be mixed, mutable, and momentary. Oh believe its report! The rod reports sin to be vile, and the world to be vain, and heaven to be glorious, and Christ to be most precious. Oh believe its report! The Hebrew word hath three other significations, but being[1] that they are not proper to our purpose, I shall pass them by.

'The rod.' The Hebrew word *matte*, that is here rendered *rod*, hath three significations:

First, It denotes 'power and strength;' Ps. ii. 9, 'a rod of iron.'

Secondly, It denotes 'rigid and harsh government:' Isa. xiv. 5, 'The Lord hath broken the staff,' or rod, 'of the wicked;' that is, 'their rigorous and cruel government.' Nebuchadnezzar had sorely afflicted the children of Judah; he was a rod, that brake them in pieces, and ruled over them with much rigour in Babylon.

Thirdly, It denotes 'sore afflictions and heavy judgments:' Ps. lxxxix. 32, 'I will visit your transgressions with a rod.' And thus you are to understand the word *rod* in the text.

'And him that hath appointed it.' It is God that appoints the rod, and ordains it for the revenge of the quarrel of his covenant. The Hebrew word *Jegnadah* signifies properly 'to appoint' or 'constitute.' It is God who appoints the rod, and who constitutes it to do what service he pleaseth. It is God that hath not only a permissive, but also an active, hand, in all the afflictions that come upon his people.

And let thus much suffice for the opening of the words.

Now, though this choice garden affords many sweet flowers, yet I shall only present you with one, which is this, viz.

That all the afflictions, troubles, trials, &c., that God lays upon his people, are his rod; and that it is their highest and greatest concernment to hear the voice of the rod, and to take out those lessons that God would have them learn by the rod.

For the opening and clearing up of this important point, I shall endeavour these two things:

First, To shew you in what respects afflictions are like unto a rod.

Secondly, To shew you what those special lessons are that you are to learn by the rod.

I. For the first, in what respects are afflictions like unto a rod?

I answer, In these seven respects afflictions are like unto a rod.

(1.) First, *The rod is never made use of but when no fair means will prevail with the child.* It is so here; God never takes up the rod, he never afflicts his people, till he hath tried all fair ways and means to humble them and reform them, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, *seq.*, Mat. xxiii. 37, 38. And when none of the offers of grace, the tenders of mercy, the wooings of Christ, the strivings of the Spirit, nor the smart debates of conscience, will awaken them, nor work upon them, then God takes up the rod, and sometimes whips them till the blood comes. But,

(2.) Secondly, *Parents choose what rods they please to correct their children with.* The child shall not choose what rod he pleaseth to be corrected with. Oh, no! It is the prerogative of the father to choose

[1] The contemporary use of the word, common in Bishop Pearson.—G.

the rod. The father may choose and use either a great rod or a little rod, a long rod or a short rod, a rod made of rosemary branches or a rod made up of a green birch. It is so here; God chooseth what rod, what affliction he pleaseth, to exercise his people with, Lev. xxvi., Deut. xxviii., Lam. iii. 9–18. You read in the Scriptures of very many rods, but they are all of God's choosing: Amos iii. 6, 'Is there any evil in the city, and hath not the Lord done it?' Though there be many rods to be found in the city, yet there is not one of them but is of God's choosing: Ruth i. 13, 'It grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me.' Ver. 21, 'I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty; why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?' Isa. xlv. 7, 'I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I, the Lord, do all these things.' Micah i. 12, 'For the inhabitants of Maroth waited carefully for good, but evil came down from the Lord unto the gates of Jerusalem.' David was whipped with many rods, but they were all of God's own choosing, Ps. xxxix. 9; and Job was whipped with many rods, but they were all of God's own choosing, chap. i. But,

(3.) Thirdly, *Parents take no pleasure, they take no delight, to use the rod.* Every lash the father gives the child, fetches blood from his own heart. The father corrects the child, and sighs over the child; he whips the child, and at the same time weeps over the child. Nothing goes more against the parents' heart, nor against their hair, than the bringing of their children under the rod of correction. It is so here, Lam. iii. 33, 'For he doth not afflict willingly,' or, as the Hebrew runs, 'he doth not afflict,' *millibbo*, 'from his heart, nor grieve the children of men.' You often read that he delights in mercy, Micah vii. 15; but where do you once read that he delights in severity, or in dealing roughly with his people? God very rarely takes up the rod but when our sins have put a force upon him, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16, Jer. v. 19. It is grievous to God to be a-grieving his people; it is a pain unto him to be a-punishing of them: Hosea xi. 8, 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.' My justice, saith God, calls upon me to rain hell out of heaven upon thee, as once I did upon Sodom and Gomorrah; but then mercy interposeth her four several hows: how? how? how? how? *how* shall I give thee up? God puts these four pathetical interrogations to himself, because none else in heaven or earth could answer them. The prophet brings in God speaking after the manner of men, who, being provoked a thousand thousand ways by the vanities and follies of their children, think to give them up to take their own courses, and to look no more after them; but then their bowels begin to work, and their hearts begin to melt, and they begin to interrogate themselves thus: 'How shall we give up these children? for though they be disobedient children, yet they are children; how can we turn them out of doors? how can we disown them? how can we disinherit them? for though they are rebellious children, yet they are children, &c. Afflictions are called God's work, yea, his 'strange work;' his act, yea, 'his strange act;' as if God were

out of his element when he is afflicting or chastising his people, Isa. xxviii. 21. But,

(4.) Fourthly, *The rod is smarting, grievous, and troublesome; and so are afflictions to our natures*: Heb. xii. 11, 'Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous.' Flesh and blood startles and is troubled at the least trouble. Affliction is a sort of physic that makes most sick. Some write that tigers will grow mad, and tear their own flesh, and rend themselves in pieces, if they do but hear drums or tabors sound about them.[1] Were not Job and Jeremiah such tigers, who, in the day of their afflictions, did more than curse the day of their birth? Job iii., Jer. xx. Oh what a bitter cup, what a heavy burden was affliction to them! Job x. 1, 'My soul is weary of my life.' Job vii. 15, 'My soul chooseth strangling and death rather than life.' Ps. vi. 6, 'I am weary with my groaning.' Ps. lxix. 1–3, 'Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing. I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying, my throat is dried: mine eyes fail, while I wait for my God.' Doubtless many good men have sat under Elijah his juniper, 1 Kings xix. 4, wishing themselves out of the world, if it might stand with divine pleasure, that they might rest from their sins and sorrows, and be rid of their many burdens and bondages, looking upon life [as] little better than a hell, were it not for the hopes of a heaven hereafter. But,

(5.) Fifthly, *When parents take up the rod into their hands, they will not lay it down till they have subdued the spirits of their children, and brought them to submit and to kiss the rod, and to sit still and quiet before them.*[2] It is so here: when God takes up the rod, he will not lay it down till he hath brought us to lie quietly at his feet: Lev. xxvi. 40–42, 'If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they have trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary to me; and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity, then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land.' When God takes up the rod, his children must either bow or break; they must say, the Lord is righteous; they must kiss the rod of correction, or else destruction will come like a whirlwind upon them, Isa. v. 3, 6.

It is reported of the lion, that he spares those creatures that fall down before him, and submit unto him; but as for those that endeavour to run from him, or to contend with him, those he tears in pieces. It is just so with the Lion of the tribe of Judah, as you may see in that Hosea v. 14, 15.

King Edward riding furiously after a servant of his[3] that had highly displeased him, with a drawn sword in his hand as purposing to kill

[1] Plutarch, lib. *de superstitione.*

[2] Rodolphus the emperor's motto was, *Omnia ex voluntate Dei*, all must be as God will have it. And this should be every Christian's motto under the rod.

[3] [Foxe] Acts and Mon. in Edward 1. [*Sub nomine*: Foxe, by Townsend, vol. ii. 577, *seq.*—G.]

him, seeing him submit, and on bended knee sueing for his life, did not only put up his sword, but also spared him, and received him into his favour. The King of kings will never put up his sword when once he hath drawn it, till his people fall on their knees, and submit unto him. God never left chastising of Ephraim till he had brought him to his bow, till he had made him submit, and kiss the rod, Jer. xxxi. 18–20. But,

(6.) Sixthly, *Afflictions are called a rod, in respect of the hand that lays them on.* Though affliction be a rod, it is a rod in a Father's hand. The sword is in the judge's hand, John xviii. 11, and the cudgel is in the master's hand; but the rod is in the father's hand, Heb. xii. 6–9. When Balaam's ass offended him, he wished for a sword to slay him, Num. xxii. 29; but so doth not God. When we do most highly provoke him, he doth not take up a sword to slay us, but only a rod to scourge us and chastise us, as indulgent fathers do their dearest children. But,

(7.) Seventhly and lastly, *Afflictions are called a rod, in regard of the ends to which they serve.* A rod is not to kill, but to cure; it is not for destruction, but for correction. When David gave a full commission to his soldiers against Absalom, it was not to slay him, but to restrain him; it was not to ruin him, but to reduce him to his former obedience. The application is easy. We can as well live without our daily bread as without our daily rod. Now, the end of taking up the rod are these:

[1.] First and more generally, *It is for the good of the child, and not for his hurt.* It is so here. God takes up the rod, but it is for the good of his people: Gen. l. 20, 'But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.' Divine goodness did so over-master the plotted malignity of Joseph's brethren as that it made a blessed medicine of a most deadly poison: Jer. xxiv. 5, 'Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good.' When Israel was dismissed out of Egypt, Exod. xl., it was with gold and ear-rings; and when Judah was dismissed out of Babylon, it was with great gifts, jewels, and all necessary utensils, Ezra i. So Rom. viii. 28, 'And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.' This text, like Moses's tree cast into the bitter waters of affliction, may make them sweet and wholesome to drink of. But,

[2.] Secondly, and more particularly, *The rod is to make the child sensible of his folly and vanity:* Prov. x. 13, 'In the lips of him that hath understanding, wisdom is found; but the rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding.' So it is here: God takes up the rod, but it is to make his people sensible of their folly and vanity; it is to make them look up to him, and to look into conscience, and to look out to their conversations. *Schola crucis* is *schola lucis.* God's house of correction is his school of instruction. His lashers are our lessons, his scourges are our schoolmasters, and his chastisements are our advertisements. Hence both the Hebrews and Greeks express *chastening* and *teaching* by one and the same word, *musar, paideia,* because the

latter is the true end of the former, according to that in the proverb, 'Smart makes wit, and vexation gives understanding.'[1] Afflictions are a Christian's looking-glass,[2] by which he may see how to dress his own soul, and to mend whatsoever is amiss. They are pills made up by a heavenly hand on purpose to clear our eyesight: 1 Kings xvii. 18, 'And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?' If God had not taken away her son, her sin had not been brought to remembrance. It was the speech of an holy man in his sickness: 'In this disease,' said he, 'I have learned how great God is, and what the evil of sin is. I never knew to purpose what God was before, nor what sin was before.' The cross opens men's eyes, as the tasting of honey did Jonathan's. 'Here,' as that martyr phrased it, 'we are still a-learning our A, B, C, and our lesson is never past Christ's cross, and our walking is still home by weeping-cross.' But,

[3.] Thirdly, *The rod is used to prevent further folly, mischief, and misery:* Prov. xxiii. 13, 14, 'Withhold not correction from the child, for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.' It is said of the ape, that she huggeth her young ones to death; so many fond parents, by not correcting their children, they come to slay their children. The best way to prevent their being scourged with scorpions in hell, is to chastise them with the rod here. So God takes up the rod; he afflicts and chastiseth his dearest children, but it is to prevent soul-mischief and misery; it is to prevent pride, self-love, worldliness, &c. Paul was one of the holiest men that ever lived on earth; he was called by some an earthly angel, and yet he needed the rod, he needed a thorn in the flesh, to prevent pride; witness the doubling of those words in one verse, 'lest I should be exalted above measure, lest I should be exalted above measure,' 2 Cor. xii. 7-9. If Paul had not been buffeted, who knows how highly he might have been exalted in his own conceit? Prudent physicians do often give their patients physic, to prevent diseases; and so doth the physician of souls by his dearest servants, Job xl. 4, 5, Hos. ii. 6, 7; Job xxxiii. 17, 19, 'He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.' Afflictions are the Lord's drawing-plasters, by which he draws out the core of pride, earthliness, self-love, covetousness, &c. Pride was one of man's first sins, and is still the root and source of all other sins. Now, to prevent it, God many times chastens man with pain, yea, with strong pain, upon his bed: Job xxxiv. 31, 32, 'Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.' The burnt child dreads the fire. Sin is but a bitter sweet; it is an evil worse than hell itself. Look, as salt brine preserves things from putrefying, and as salt marshes keep the sheep from rotting, so sanctified rods, sanctified afflictions, preserves and keeps the people of God from sinning. But,

[1] Isa. xxvi. 9; Ps. xciv. 12; Prov. iii. 12, 13; Job xxxvi. 8–10.

[2] *Oculos quos peccatum claudit, pœna aperit.* The eye that sin shuts, afflictions open. —*Gregory.*

[4.] Fourthly, *The rod is to purge out that vanity and folly that is bound up in the heart of the child:* Prov. xxii. 15, 'Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.' The rod is an ordinance, as well as the word; and such parents that use it as an ordinance, praying and weeping over it, shall find it effectual for the chasing away of evil out of their children's heart. Eli and David were two very choice men, and yet, by their fondness on one hand, and neglect of this ordinance on the other hand, they ruined their sons; and whether they did not undo their souls, I shall not at this time stand to inquire. When Moses cast away his rod, it became a serpent, Exod. iv. 3; and so, when parents cast away the rod of correction, it is ten to one but that their children become the brood of the serpent: Prov. xiii. 24, 'He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.' Not only the care, but also the cure of the child, so far as the rod will reach, lies upon the hands of the parent.

Now afflictions are like a rod in this respect also, for, as they are sanctified, they cleanse and purge away the dross, the filth, and the scum[1] of the daughter of Zion: Isa. i. 25, 'And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin;' Isa. xxvii. 9, 'By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin;' Dan. xi. 35, 'And some of them of understanding shall fall' (that is, 'into great afflictions'), 'to try them, and to purge them, and to make them white, even to the time of the end.' All the harm the fire did the three children, or rather the three champions, was to burn off their cords, Dan. iii. 23, 24. Our lusts are cords of vanity, but the fire of affliction shall burn them up: Zech. xiii. 9, 'And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God.' Sharp afflictions are a fire to purge out our dross, and to make our graces shine; they are a potion, to carry away ill humours; they are cold frosts, to destroy the vermin; they are a tempestuous sea, to purge the wine from its lees; they are like the north wind, that drieth up the vapours, that purgeth the blood, and quickens the spirits; they are a sharp corrosive, to eat out the dead flesh. Afflictions are compared to baptizing and washing, that takes away the filth of the soul, as water doth the filth of the body, Mat. x. 38, 39. God would not rub so hard, were it not to fetch out the dirt and spots that be in his people's hearts.

[5.] Fifthly, The rod serves to improve that good that is in the child: Prov. xxix. 15, 'The rod and reproof giveth wisdom, but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.' So afflictions they serve to improve our graces: Heb. xii. 10, 'For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness'; that is, that we might more and more be partakers of his holiness. Ver. 11, 'Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are

[1] Spelled 'scumb.'—G.

exercised thereby.' Hence it is that the saints glory in tribulation: Rom. v. 3, 4, 'And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope.' Grace always thrives most when saints are under the rod. When Christians are under the rod, then their graces do not only bud, but blossom and bring forth fruit, as Aaron's rod did, Num. xvii. 8. The snuffing of the candle makes it burn the brighter. God beats and bruises his links,[1] to make them burn the brighter; he bruises his spices, to make them send forth the greater aromatical savour.

Bernard compares afflictions to the *teasle*, which, though it be sharp and scratching, is to make the cloth more pure and fine. The Jews were always best when they were in an afflicted condition. Well waters arising from deep springs are hotter in the winter than they are in the summer. Stars shine brightest in the darkest nights. Vines grow the better for bleeding, and gold looks the better for scouring. Juniper smells sweetest when in the fire; camomile, the more you tread it, the more you spread it. O sirs! this is a real and a rare truth, but seldom thought on, viz. that God will sometimes more carry on the growth and improvement of grace by a cross, by an affliction, than by an ordinance, James i. 3, 4, iv. 8, 9. Afflictions ripen the saint's graces, 2 Cor. i. 5. First or last, God will make every rod, yea, every twig in every rod, to be an ordinance to every afflicted saint. By afflictions, God many times revives, quickens, and recovers the decayed graces of his people. By afflictions, God many times inflames that love that is cold, and he strengthens that faith that is failing, and he puts life into those hopes that are languishing, and new spirits into those joys and comforts that are withering and dying. Musk, say some, when it hath lost its sweetness, if it be put into the sink amongst filth, it recovers its sweetness again. So doth smart afflictions recover and revive our decayed graces.

I have read a story of a sexton, that went into the church at night to rob a woman who had been buried the day before with a gold ring upon her finger, according to her desire. Now, when he had opened the grave and coffin, and loosed the sheet, he fell a-rubbing and chafing her finger to get off the gold ring; and with rubbing and chafing of it, her spirits returned, she having been but in a swoon before, and she revived, and lived many years after.[2] Smart afflictions are but the rubbing and chafing of our graces. The smarting rod abaseth the loveliness of the world, that might entice us; it abates the lustiness of the flesh within, that might incite us to vanity and folly; and it abets the spirit in his quarrel to the two former: all which tend much to the recovering and reviving of decayed graces. But,

[6.] The sixth end to which the rod serves, and that is, *To try the child, to make a discovery of the spirit of the child.* Some parents never see so much of the badness of the spirits of their children as they do when they bring them under the rod; and other parents never see so much of the goodness of the spirits of their children as they do when

[1] 'Torches:' which recalls the axiom, 'Truth, like a torch, the more it's shook it shines.'—G.

[2] This actually occurred with Mrs Henry Erskine, who afterwards gave birth to the Erskines, so famous in Scotch ecclesiastical history. See Lives, by Fraser, of Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine, 2 vols.—G.

they chastise them with the rod. It is so here. When God afflicts some, oh the pride! the stoutness! the crossness! the hardness! the peevishness and stubbornness of spirit, that they discover! Isa. i. 5; Jer. v. 3; Exod. v. 2; Jer. xliv. 15–19. When he afflicts others, oh the murmuring! the roaring! the complaining! the howling! the fretting! the vexing! and the quarrelling spirit that they discover! Amos iv. 6–13; Num. xiv. 27, 29, 36; Deut. i. 27; Isa. lviii. 3, 4, lix. 11; Hosea vii. 14, 15; Jonah iv. 1–5, 8, 9. Sometimes when God afflicts his dearest people, oh what a spirit of faith! what a spirit of prayer! what a spirit of love! what a spirit of patience! what a spirit of meekness! what a spirit of humbleness! what a spirit of submissiveness do they discover! Job xiii. 15; 2 Chron. 1–6, 12; Isa. xxvi. 16, 17; Hosea v. 14, 15; Job i. 20–22; Lev. x. 1–3; 1 Sam. iii. 18; 2 Kings xx. 16–19. And at other times, when God afflicts his poor people, oh what a spirit of unbelief! what a spirit of slavish fear! what a spirit of impatiency! what a spirit of displeasedness, &c., do they discover! Gen. xv. 2, 3; xii. 13, 19; xx. 2, 5; xxvi. 7–11; Ps. xxxi. 22; cxvi. 11; 1 Sam. xxi. 10–15; Job iii. 3–13; Jer. xx. 14–18. By smart afflictions, God tries the graces of his people, and discovers what is in the spirits of his people, Deut. viii. 2; Ps. lxvi. 10, 11; Rev. iii. 18; 1 Peter i. 6, 7. The fire tries the gold as well as the touchstone. Diseases try the art of the physician, and tempests try the skill of the pilot. Every smarting rod is a touchstone, both to try our graces and to discover our spirits. Prudent fathers will sometimes cross their children, to try to discover the dispositions of their children, Heb. xii. 5–21. And so doth the Father of spirits deal sometimes with his children.

The manner of the *Psylli*, which are a kind of people of that temper and constitution that no venom will hurt them, is this,[1] if they suspect any child to be none of their own, they set an adder upon it to sting it; and if it cry, and the flesh swell, they cast it away as a spurious issue; but if it do not quatch[2] nor cry, nor is never the worse for it, then they account it for their own, and make very much of it. The application is easy. But,

[7.] The seventh and last end of the rod, *Is to prepare and fit the chastised for greater services, favours, and mercies.* Many a child and many a servant had never been so fit for eminent services as they are, had they not been under a smarting rod. It is very usual with God to cast them into very great afflictions, and to lay them under grievous smarting rods, that so he may prepare and fit them for some high and eminent services in this world. Joseph had never been so fit to be governor of Egypt, and to preserve the visible church of God alive in the world, if he had not been sold into Egypt, Gen. xli. 40–44; if his feet had not been hurt in the stocks, and if the irons had not entered into his soul, Gen. xlv. 7, 8. Nor Moses had never been so fit to be a leader and a deliverer of Israel as he was, if he had not been banished forty years in the wilderness before, Exod. ii. 15. Nor David's crown had never sat so well, nor so close, nor so long on his head as it did, had he not for some years before been hunted as a partridge in the wilderness, 1 Sam. xxvi. 20. Nor the three children, or rather the

[1] Pliny, lib. xxviii. [Rather lib. vii. c. 2.—G.] [2] 'Shrink;' see Vol. I. as above.—G.

three champions, would never have been fit for so high a rule, had they not been first cast into the fiery furnace, Dan. iii. 29, 30. Nor Daniel, for that exceeding high honour, and glory, and greatness to which he was exalted, had he not been first cast among the lions, Dan. vi. 25, *et seq.* And so had Esther never been a poor captive maid, she had never been a queen, and so had never been instrumental in the preservation of the church of God in her day. Heman was one of the best and wisest men in the world in his day, 1 Kings iv. 31; and this God brought him to by training of him up in the school of affliction, as you may evidently see in that 88th psalm. That of the apostle in 2 Cor. i. 4, deserves to be written in letters of gold, 'Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.' Mark that word *able.* Oh, it is one of the hardest and noblest works in all Christianity to be able divinely to comfort others that are in troubles; and yet by sufferings God fits and prepares his people for this noble and difficult service.

Luther was of opinion that to comfort a distressed conscience was a greater work than to raise the dead to life. And yet by inward and outward sufferings, God fits his people for this great work.

And thus you see in what respects afflictions are compared to a rod.

II. The second thing I am to do is to shew you those special lessons that you are to learn by the rod, or if you please, by the raging pestilence.

Now they are these·

(1.) The first lesson that you are to learn by the rod or by the raging pestilence, is, *to know what the particular message or errand is which the rod hath to deliver to you in the day of your distress and trouble.* Your first work is to do as David did, in that 2 Sam. xxi. 1. He humbly inquires of the Lord to know the particular reason why he sent a famine amongst them. You must do as Job doth: Job x. 2, 'Shew me, O Lord, wherefore thou contendest with me.' Job would fain know the reason of the controversy between God and him. One well observes on the text, 'that Job was very desirous to know whether God did afflict him for sin or for trial, not to satisfy his curiosity, but his conscience.'[1] Elihu's counsel to Job must here take place: Job, xxxiv. 31, 32, 'Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which I see not teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.' Job it seems was yet in the dark as to the particular cause or reason why the Lord had so grievously afflicted him; and therefore he is very importunate with God that he would graciously point out the sin for which he had so sorely smitten him. Thy proceedings, saith Job, to my understanding seem to be very strange and severe. I am more afflicted than others, and yet I do not know wherein I have sinned more than others; why I should be condemned and cast without a trial; why thou art so hot against me, and why thou hast multiplied so many unheard of miseries against me; and why thou hast so greatly subjected me to the saddest and sourest censures of others, as if I were the worst of sinners and the basest of hypocrites, I know not; and therefore, O

[1] Trapp *in loco* makes the observation from another.—G.

Lord! I humbly desire that thou wouldst not deal with me according to thy absolute power, but let me know the true grounds and causes of all my heavy sorrows and miseries. And so he is at it again, in that Job xiii. 23, 'How many are mine iniquities and sins! make me to know my transgression and my sin.' My plagues, O Lord! are unparalleled; if my sins are such, let me know it, saith Job. My calamities transcend the calamities of all others; if my sins do so, let them not be hid from mine eyes, O Lord! My load, O Lord! is heavier than others; and therefore if my sins are greater than others, let me see them, let me understand them. Infirmities and weaknesses, I confess, do hang upon me; they are inherent in me, and they do too often issue and flow from me; but as for enormities or wickednesses, neither my censorious friends, nor yet my worst enemies, no, nor yet my own conscience, will ever be able to make any just or clear proof against me. O Lord! I have many spots upon me, but if there be any upon me that are not the spots of thy people, let me see them, let me know them, that I may abhor myself, and justify thee, and that I may say my friends are righteous in their censures, and I have done wickedly before the Lord. Sometimes afflictions are sent only for trial and instruction, and not at all for sin. This is evident in the case of Job, and in the case of the blind man, whose afflictions, though they were very great and grievous, yet were they not for sin but for trial, John ix. 1, *et seq.*

Now, though this be true, yet it must be granted that commonly sin is the meritorious cause, the procuring cause, of all afflictions, Micah i. 5–10, Amos ii. 4–6. Sin ordinarily is the original foundation of all our troubles and chastisements: Ps. lxxxix. 30–32, 'If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes;' Jer. ii. 19, 'Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee. Know, therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts;' Amos iii. 2, 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.'

Quest. But what course must we take? what means must we use, to find out that particular sin, for which God corrects us, or which hath brought the rod upon us?

Ans. 1. *Observe what that sin is, that thy conscience doth most upbraid thee with, and check thee for.* Conscience is God's preacher in the bosom, Gen. xlii. 21, l. 15–17. Now, observe what that particular sin is, that conscience doth most smartly and roundly correct and chastise thee for; for it is ten to one but that is the sin that hath brought the rod upon thee. The voice of conscience, and the voice of the rod, do usually echo one to another. It is very rare to find a difference between the language of conscience and the language of the rod. Conscience is God's deputy, God's spy, God's notary, God's viceroy; and therefore do not despise the voice of conscience, do not turn off conscience, as Felix turned off Paul, Acts xxiv. 25. If the secret cry of conscience be, Oh, this is for thy pride, or this is for thy passion, or this is for thy self-love, or this is for thy earthliness, or this is for thy carnalness, or this is for thy hypocrisy, or this is for thy formality,

&c., it will be thy wisdom to subscribe to the secret cry of conscience. But,

Ans. 2. Secondly, *Seriously observe what that sin is that thy soul would have spared above all, that thy soul is most unwilling to leave, and bid an everlasting farewell to.* Observe what thy right hand sin, thy bosom sin, thy constitution sin, thy complexion sin, is, for it is a hundred to one but that God hath sent the rod for the subduing of that very sin, Micah vi. 6, 7, Esther v. 13. Commonly by the rod God points at the mortifying of that particular sin to which the heart stands most strongly inclined. But,

Ans. 3. Thirdly, *Observe what that sin is, that doth most maim and mar thy confidence and boldness in all thy addresses and approaches to God,* 1 John iii. 20, 21; for doubtless that is the sin that God would subdue and bring under by the rod. But,

Ans. 4. Fourthly, *Observe what the affliction, what the pain, what the disease, what the punishment is, that you are under,* for sometimes a person may run and read his sin in his very punishment: Judges i. 7, 'Threescore and ten kings having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me.' Now shall Adonibezek, a heathen prince, run and read his sin in his punishment; and shall not a Christian much more? Shall not grace do as much as blind nature? Look, as a man may sometimes guess at the disease of the patient by the prudent observing of the physician's bill; so may he sometimes guess at the particular sin that God would have destroyed by the punishment that is inflicted. God usually, first or last, meets with men, and pays them home in their own coin. Is the judgment shame? Then the sin was pride, Hosea ii. 8, 9. Is the judgment want, famine? Then the sin was abuse of abundance. Is the judgment oppression? Then the sin was unmercifulness. Is the judgment loss of children? Then the sin was inordinate love to them. Eli and David were too indulgent to their children; and therefore they were punished in them and by them. Is the judgment sickness or want of health? Then the sin was either the abuse of health, or the non-improvement of health. Is the judgment a famine of the word? Then the sin was slighting and loathing of the word. Is the judgment war? Then the sin was abuse of peace. Is the judgment a blind, carnal, profane, formal, drunken, superstitious clergy? Then the sin hath been slighting, neglecting, undervaluing, and despising an able, knowing, zealous, spiritual, and powerful ministry. Is the judgment a worshipping of God in a lazy, dry, dull, dead, formal, customary way, according to the inventions and traditions of the elders? Then the sin hath been men's not worshipping of God in spirit and in truth, and with that zeal, spirit, life, warmth, and fervency as he requires, John iv. 23, 24, Rom. xii. 11. Is the judgment the breaking of the communion of God's people, and scattering of them into holes and corners, as it was in Ahab's, and Jezebel's, and Gideon's days? Judges vi. 1–5. Then doubtless the sin hath been a slighting, undervaluing, neglecting, or forsaking of Christian communion, or else a non-improvement of Christian communion. But,

Ans. 5. Fifthly, *Observe whether you have not been very faulty towards others in the very things you now suffer yourselves.* Do others wrong

you in your names, estates, relations, callings, dealings, &c.? Lay your hands upon your hearts, and ask them whether you have never wronged others as others now wrong you, Isa. xxxiii. 1, Rev. xiii. 10, James ii. 10, Gen. l. 15–17. Do others rashly judge you, and bitterly censure you, and falsely accuse you, and unjustly condemn you? If they do, reflect upon your former carriages towards others; and if you must plead guilty, throw the first stone at yourselves, and say with Adonibezek, 'As I have done, so God hath requited me.' Let every lash of God upon you put you in mind of your deportment towards others, when God hath given them gall and wormwood to drink, Mat. vii. 1, 2. But,

Ans. 6. Sixthly, *Observe what that sin is that thou canst not endure should be touched, or reproved, or spoken against,* Prov. i. 25, 30, xii. 1, xvii. 10, ix. 8, xv. 12. Ah! how proud, how impatient, how passionate, how mad are many, when you come to touch their right-eye sin. When you come to touch them in the tender part, oh! then they fume, and swell, and rage, and take on like men and women out of their wits, as you may see in the scribes and pharisees, who were so angry and mad with Christ that they sought his death; and all because he was still a-pointing at the toads in their bosoms, viz. pride, vain-glory, hypocrisy, and self-righteousness. Oh! they could not endure that the sharp razor of reproof should come near their sorest part. Certainly that Christian must be under a very high distemper, that cannot but smite a righteous man with reproach for smiting him with a reproof. Though gracious reproofs are choice physic, yet few stomachs can tell how to bear them. Most Christians are for lenitives, few are for corrosives. David was glad of a healing reproof, but there are but few Davids alive, Ps. cxli. 5. Who is angry with the physician for prescribing a bitter potion? And yet, ah! how angry are many Christians when they come to fall under holy reproofs, especially if there be any of that sharpness and cuttingness in them that the apostle exhorts to in that Titus i. 13. Now, doubtless, the voice of the rod is this, Soul! take heed of that sin that thou canst not endure should be touched. Labour mightily with God to get that particular sin mortified that thou canst not endure should be reproved. But,

Ans. 7. Seventhly, *Observe what sin that is that doth most hinder thee from closing with the precious promises, and from living upon precious promises, and from improving of precious promises, and from treasuring up of precious promises, and from appropriating of precious promises to thine own soul,* Ps. l. 16, 17. And it is very probable that, for the subduing of that sin, the Lord hath visited thee with his fatherly rod. But,

Ans. 8. Eighthly, *Observe what sin that is that did most sting and terrify thee in an evil day, as when thou hast been under some loathsome disease or tormenting pain,* Gen. xlii. 21; be it stone, gout, or burning fever, or when thou hast been in some imminent danger, or when thou hast had a sentence of death upon thee, and there hath been but a short step between thee and eternity. Doubtless that sin, which hath lain as a heavy load upon thy conscience in the days of thy former distress, that is the sin that God would have conquered and brought under by his present rod. But,

Ans. 9. Ninthly, *Observe what particular sin that is that doth most*

hinder thee in holy duties and services, and that doth most interrupt thee in thy communion with God. Inquire what particular sin that is that thy heart is most apt to run after when thou art on the mount of holy duties, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. Whilst the disciples were healing diseases and casting devils out of other men's bodies, the proud white devil was stirring in their own souls, as is evident by that gentle rebuke that our Saviour gives them in Luke x. 20, 'In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.' There is no duty that a Christian performs but one white devil or another, one lust or another, will be still dogging and following of him to that duty. There is no public duty, there is no family duty, there is no private duty that a Christian performs, but either that white devil pride, or that white devil hypocrisy, or that white devil vainglory, or else some one or another white devil will follow the soul, hard at heel to it. Now, mark what that particular sin is that most haunts thy soul when thou art in religious duties and services; and it may be that is the very sin that God would have subdued by the rod. But,

Ans. 10. Tenthly, *Observe what sin that is that the rest of your corruptions are most serviceable to, and that they most attend upon.* Mark what sin that is that all other sins do most bow the knee to. Mark that sin that hath a commanding power over all other sins, that saith to one Go and he goeth, and to another Come and he cometh. Mark what sin that is that is still uppermost, and that all other sins do most minister to. You know when a man hath a great wound in his body, all the ill humours will run thither. Observe what sin that is that all the ill humours of the soul do most run after; for it is very likely that that is the very sin that God would have brought under by the rod. But,

Ans. 11. Eleventhly, *Observe what that sin is that your hearts are most apt to hide and cloak, and cover over with the most specious and fair pretences.* Saul had a covetous desire, and he covers it over with fair pretences, as that the people would have it so, and that what was spared was for sacrifice, 1 Sam. xv. 20, 21. Cæsar's favour was the great darling in Pilate's eyes, but he covers all over with washing his hands, Mat. xxvii. 24. The scribes and pharisees were exceeding covetous, but their long prayers, as a cloak, must cover all, Mat. xxiii. Judas also was a man of the same mind and mettle with them: 'What need this waste? Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein,' Mat. xxvi. 8, 9; John xii. 5, 6. Judas, as Tertullian thinks, was pretty honest till he carried the bag; but no sooner was he in office, but he puts conscience out of office, but all must be covered over with a cloak of charity.[1] Observe what sin that is that you are most apt to cast the silk or the satin mantle over; and it is ten to one but that is the sin that God would have brought under by the rod. But,

Ans. 12. Twelfthly and lastly, *Observe what that sin is that thou art most easily overcome by.* Delilah could easily overcome Samson, when all the world besides could make no conquest upon him. The

[1] Tertullian: Opera, *sub nomine* Judas.—G.

apostle bids us 'lay aside the sin that doth so easily beset us,' Heb. xii. 1. There are some sins that find more easy approaches to us, and more easy acceptance with us, and accordingly they do more easily captivate us. Observe what that sin is that you do most readily and easily open the door to; and doubtless that is the sin that God would have mortified and subdued by the rod.

(2.) The second lesson that you are to learn by the rod or by the raging pestilence, is, *deeply to judge yourselves and greatly to humble your souls, for that sin or sins that hath brought the rod upon you.* Thus David did in that 2 Sam. xxiv. 10, 17.[1] When you have found out the Achan that hath brought the rod upon you, stone him to death; and lie humble and low under the rod, and then the Almighty will be graciously pacified and sweetly reconciled unto you.

(3.) The third lesson that you are to learn by the rod or by the raging pestilence, is, *to view the rod on every side.* If there be briars on one side of the rod, there is rosemary on the other side of the rod; if there be wormwood and gall at one end of the rod, there is sweet honey at the other end of the rod, as there was at the top of Jonathan's rod, 1 Sam. xiv. 43.

If we should come into a painter's or a limner's shop, and see a picture half drawn, it might trouble us and startle us, if it did not fright us and amaze us; but yet, when the picture is perfected, completed, and finished, it may prove a very beauteous, lovely, taking piece. The application is easy. Look, as every judgment, every affliction, every rod, hath its black, dark side, so every judgment, every affliction, hath its bright side too. Now, it is the wisdom of a Christian to look on the bright side of the rod, the cloud, as well as it is his work to look on the dark side of the rod, the cloud. When a Christian looks upon the dark side of the cloud, he should be humbled and abased; but when he looks upon the bright side of the cloud, he should be comforted and cheered, James v. 11. He that is still a-looking on the briary side of the rod, will be very apt to fret and faint under the rod; but he that looks on the rosemary side of the rod, as well as the briary side of the rod, he will bear up patiently, gallantly, and cheerfully under the rod. The voice of the rod is, Look on both sides, look on both sides. But,

(4.) The fourth lesson that you are to learn by the rod or by the raging pestilence, is, *to look on the rod, not abstractly from the hand that holds it, but conjunctively with the hand that holds it.* Thus Hezekiah did, 2 Kings xx. 16–19; thus Aaron did, Lev. x. 1–3; thus Eli did, 1 Sam. iii. 11–19; thus David did, Ps. xxxix. 9; thus Job did, Job i. 20–22; yea, and thus Jesus did, John xviii. 11, 'Shall I not drink the cup that my Father hath given me to drink?' Though the cup was a bitter cup, a bloody cup, yet seeing it was put into his hand by his Father, he drinks it off, with a '*Father, I thank thee.*' The rod in itself sounds nothing but smart and blood to the child; but the rod in the hand of a Father sounds nothing but love, kindness, and sweetness: Rev. iii. 19, 'Whom he loves, he chastens.' You should never look upon the rod but as it is in the hand of your heavenly Father, and then you will rather kiss it than murmur under it. But,

(5.) The fifth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the

[1] Pray turn to these scriptures: 2 Chron. xxviii. 10; Jer. viii. 6; Ezek. vii. 15, 16.

raging pestilence, is *to cleave and cling close to God under the rod.* Oh how doth the child cling and hang upon his father when he takes up the rod. Let such a child-like spirit be found in you, when the Father of spirits takes up the rod. When the rod was upon David's back, oh how doth he cleave to God, even as the wife cleaves to her husband; for so much the Hebrew word *dabak* in that Psalm lxiii. 8 imports. So when Job was under the rod, oh how doth he cling about God! Job xiii. 15, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.' Job will hang upon a killing God; so the church in that Psalm lxxx. 15–18, &c.; so those hundred forty and four thousand that had their fathers' names written in their foreheads, Rev. xiv. 1–6. O friends! you never shew so much child-like love, nor so much child-like ingenuity,[1] nor so much child-like integrity, as you do shew when, under the smarting rod, you are found clinging about the Lord, and hanging upon the Lord by an exercise of grace. When Antisthenes held up his staff, as if he intended to beat one of his scholars out of his school, the scholar told him 'that he might strike him if he pleased, but he should never find a staff of so hard wood as should ever be able to beat him from him.'[2] When no staff, no rod, no affliction, can drive us from Christ, it is a sure argument that we have profited much in the school of Christ. But,

(6.) The sixth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, *to prepare to meet the Lord whilst the rod is in his hand:* Amos iv. 12, 'Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.' Now there is a twofold preparation.

[1.] The first is a negative preparation: and this lies in taking heed of sinning against light and conscience; for those sins that are against a clear light and an awakened conscience are most wounding, wasting, terrifying, and damning.

[2.] Secondly, There is a positive preparation: and that consists in repentance and returning to the Lord, and in abasing and humbling yourselves before the Almighty, 2 Chron. vii. 14. As there is no running from God, so there is no contending with God; for what is the chaff to the whirlwind, or the stubble to a consuming fire? and therefore the voice of the rod is, Prepare to meet the Lord in a way of faith and repentance; prepare to meet the Lord in an exercise of grace; prepare to meet the Lord with prayers, and tears, and strong cries. But,

(7.) The seventh lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, *to acknowledge God's sovereign power and authority over the rod, to bow it, or break it, or burn it, or take it off, or lay it more or less on as he pleaseth,* Micah vi. 13, Deut. xxviii. 58–61. All diseases and sicknesses are under the command of God; they are all his sergeants, his servants, to execute his pleasure. That Mat. viii. 5 is an observable text. Christ tells the centurion that he would come and heal his servant; the centurion tells him that he was not worthy that he should come under his roof; only, if he would but speak the word, his servant should be healed; 'For,' saith he, ver. 9, 'I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my ser-

[1] 'Ingenuousness.'—G.

[2] The 'scholar' was Diogenes. Cf. Antisthenes' *Fragmenta*, by Winckelmann.—G.

vant, Do this, and he doth it. Now when Jesus heard this, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel,' ver. 10. But wherein did the greatness of the centurion's faith appear? Why, in this very acknowledgment, that all diseases were to Christ as servants, and that they were as much under the command of Jesus Christ, as any servant under heaven is under the command of his master. When Christ bids them go and afflict such a man, they go; and torment such a man, they go; and kill such a man, they go; and so, when he calls them off, they come off at his call. Dear friends, it is a very great point of faith to believe these five things.

[1.] First, *That God is the author of all the diseases, maladies, and sicknesses that be in the world, and that he sets them on and calls them off at his own good will and pleasure:* Amos iii. 6, 'Is there any evil in the city, and hath not the Lord done it?' He speaks of the evil of punishment, and not of the evil of sin. It was a mad principle among the Manichees, who referred all calamities to the devil for their author, as if there could be evil in the city, and the Lord have no hand in it.

[2.] Secondly, *It is a great point of faith to believe that all diseases and sicknesses are limited by God in respect of places.* God sent diseases of all sorts into Egypt, but he forbade them Goshen, Exod. viii. 20–23, ix. 23–26. Ponder seriously upon these scriptures. God's shooting his arrows into one town and not into another, into one city and not into another, into one kingdom and not into another, into one family and not into another, doth sufficiently evidence that all diseases and sicknesses are limited by the Holy One of Israel in respect of places.

[3.] Thirdly, It is a very great point of faith to believe *that all sicknesses and diseases are limited by God in respect of persons.* That they are so, is evident in that Psalm xci. 3–8, Isa. lxv. 12. But who lives in the faith of this truth? Sometimes in the same house one is infected, and the other is not; sometimes in the same bed the one is smitten, and the other is not; sometimes at the same table the one is taken away, and the other is left, &c.; and this doth roundly evidence and witness that all sicknesses and diseases are limited by God in respect of persons as well as in respect of places. But,

[4.] Fourthly, It is a great point of faith to believe *that all diseases and sicknesses are limited by God in respect of the degrees to which they shall arise.* That God that sets bounds to the raging sea, and that saith unto it, 'Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther,' that God sets bounds to all raging diseases and sicknesses, and saith unto them, Thus far you shall go, and no farther. He sets bounds to the fever; he saith to it, Go and scorch and burn up such a body so much, and no more; and to the dropsy, Go and drown such a body so much, and no more; and to the raging pestilence, Go and weaken such a body so much, and no more; and to the stone, Go and torment such a body so much, and no more. But,

[5.] Fifthly, It is a very great point of faith to believe *that all diseases and sicknesses are limited by God as to their continuance.* God saith to one disease, Go, hang upon such a man so many years; to another,

Go, hang upon such a man but a few years; and to another, Go, hang upon such a man but a year; and to another, Go, hang upon such a man but a few months; and to another, Go, hang upon such a man but a few weeks; and to another, go, hang upon such a man but a few days; and to another, go, hang upon such a man but a few hours, &c.; and accordingly it cometh to pass. But,

(8.) The eighth lesson that you are to learn by the rod or by the raging pestilence, is, *to get more weaned and more mortified affections to all worldly comforts, contentments, and enjoyments.*[1] A man never comes to experience so much of the emptiness, the nothingness, the uselessness, the vanity, the mutability, the impotency, the insufficiency, and the uncertainty of all worldly comforts and enjoyments, as when he comes to fall under the rod. The constant cry of the rod is, Be dead to the profits, pleasures, honours, and applauses of the world; be dead to relations, be dead to friends, be dead to everything below a living Jesus. But,

(9.) The ninth lesson that you are to learn by the rod or by the raging pestilence is, *to get assurance of greater and better things than any this world doth afford,* Heb. x. 33, 34. That saying is as true as it is old, viz., that the assurance of an eternal life is the life of this temporal life. But having spoke so much of this particular in my treatise on assurance, which is now in your hands, I shall satisfy myself with this hint at present.[2] But,

(10.) The tenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, *not to despise the rod*: Heb. xii. 5, 'My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord.' The Greek word 'Ολιγωρει that is translated *despise,* signifies the littling of a thing. Oh! do not little the rod, do not lessen it, do not slight it, do not make a *tush* at it, do not set light by it, do not say, I will not regard it. He that doth, shews himself rather to be a Roman than a Christian. Now, because there is such a desperate aptness and proneness in many to make light of the rod, it will be your wisdom seriously to lay to heart these four particulars:

[1.] First, *That it is an immediate hand of God,* Amos iii. 6, Deut. xxviii. 58–61, and therefore not to be despised. It is a sad and sinful thing to despise the mediate hand of God; but it is more sad and sinful to despise the immediate hand of God. But,

[2.] Secondly, *It is a mighty hand of God:* 1 Peter v. 6, 'Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.' Certainly that heart must be mightily wicked that dares despise the mighty hand of God, Amos iv. 10, Ezra xxxviii. 22, 23.

[3.] Thirdly, *It is an angry hand of God,* and therefore do not despise it: Ps. xc. 7, 'For we are consumed by thy anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled;' ver. 11, 'Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.' Shall devils tremble under his angry hand? yea, shall they roar as the sea under his wrathful hand, as that Greek word φρίσσουσι in that James ii. 19, and will you presume to despise his angry hand? The Lord forbid, Num. xvi. 46, Ezra xxxiii. 27–29, Deut. xxix. 22–25. But,

[1] Gal. v. 24; 1 Cor. vii. 29–31; Eccles. i. 2; Prov. xxiii. 5; Jer. xlv. 4, 5.

[2] 'Heaven on Earth,' included in the present volume.—G.

[4.] Fourthly and lastly, Consider *that it is a holy hand, it is a just and righteous hand, it is a faithful hand of God;* and therefore do not despise it; Jer. xxix. 17–19, Lev. xxvi. 25, Jer. xiv. 12–16: Ps. cxix. 75, 'I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, or righteousness, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.' Ver. 137, 'Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments.' Certainly none but unholy persons will be so impudent as to despise God's holy hand. Well,

(11.) The eleventh lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, *not to be discouraged under the rod,* Jer xxvii. 13, 2 Sam. xxiv. 10, 17: Heb. xii. 5, 'Nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.'

First, It is a rod in a Father's hand; and therefore do not faint under it.

Secondly, God will do much good by the rod, and therefore do not faint under the rod.

Thirdly, You could not have been without the rod; and therefore do not faint under the rod.

Fourthly, The rod that is now upon [you] is not according to the greatness of God's anger, nor according to the greatness of his power, nor according to the strictness of his justice, nor according to the demerits of your sins, nor according to the malicious desires of Satan, nor according to the designs, plots, and contrivances of wicked and unreasonable men, nor according to the extensiveness of your fears,—for you have feared worse things than you feel,—nor according to that rod that hath been upon the primitive saints, nor according to that rod that many thousands of the precious sons and daughters of Sion are under in other parts of the world; and therefore do not faint under the rod, do not be discouraged under the rod.

Fifthly, by fainting under the rod, you will gratify Satan, reproach religion, render yourselves unserviceable, and make work for future repentance; and therefore do not faint under the rod. But,

(12.) The twelfth lesson that you are to learn under the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, *humbly to kiss the rod, and patiently and quietly to lie under the rod, till the Lord shall either give you a gracious or a glorious deliverance from it.*[1] What is the rod, and what is the raging pestilence, to the horrors of conscience, and to the flames of hell, or to an everlasting separation from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power? 2 Thes. i. 8, 9. And therefore put your mouths in the dust, and be silent before the Lord. He that hath deserved a hanging, if he escape with a whipping, hath no cause to murmur or complain; and we that have deserved a damning, have little cause to murmur or complain of a whipping, yea, though it should be with a pestilential rod. But,

(13.) The thirteenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, *highly, fully, freely, and signally to justify the Lord, and to think well of the Lord, and to speak well of the Lord under the rod.* To that purpose, consult these scriptures, Ps. cxix. 75, 137; Neh. ix. 33; Ezra ix. 13; Lam. i. 3, 5, 7, 8, 10; iv. 15, 18; Dan. ix. 12, 14; 2 Kings xx. 16–19; Jer. xii. 1, 2; Ps. cxix. 17–22; xxii. 1–3; xcvii. 2. But,

[1] 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, 26; Lev. xxvi. 40–42; Micah vii. 9; Lam. iii. 30.

(14.) The fourteenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, *personal reformation.* When the rod smarts, and the pestilence rageth, God expects that every man should smite upon his thigh, and turn from the evil of his doings: 2 Chron. vii. 13, 14, 'If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; if my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land;' that is, 'I will remove the judgments that are upon the land, and I will confer upon my reforming people all those favours and blessings that they stand in need of.' Consult these scriptures, Ezra x. 14, 19; 2 Chron. xxx. 8, 9; and chap. xxix. 8, 10, 15, 16. But,

(15.) The fifteenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, *to make God your habitation, your shelter, your refuge.* Ponder seriously upon those scriptures, Ps. xci. 2, 9, 10; xc. 1; lxxi. 3; lvii. 1. They dwell most safely, most securely, most nobly, who dwell in God, who live under the shadow of the Almighty, and who every day lodge their souls in the bosom of eternal loves. But,

(16.) The sixteenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or the raging pestilence, is, *to set up God as the great object of your fear:* Ps. cxix. 119, 120; Isa. viii. 7, 8, 13, 14, compared. When the judgments of God are either threatened or executed, feared or felt, it highly concerns us to lift up God as the main object of our fear. We should fear the hand that lays on the rod, more than the rod itself, Job. xiii. 11, Jer. xxxvi. 24. When God takes up the rod, when he draws his sword, and when he shoots his pestilential arrows amongst us, oh how highly doth it concern us to fear before him with a child-like fear, with a reverential fear, with a fear that fortifies the heart against sin, and with a fear that fits the soul for duty, and that draws, yea, drives the soul to duty. But.

(17.) The seventeenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, *to expect God's singular presence with you, and his admirable protection over you.* Consult these scriptures, Isa. xliii. 2; Dan. iii. 24, 25; Gen. xxxix. 39, 40; Ps. xxiii. 4, 5; Ps. xci.; Isa. lxiii. 9; Isa. xxvi. 20, 21; Ezek. ix. 4, 6. God is above his people and beneath them, Deut. xxxiii. 25–27. He is under them and over them, Cant. ii. 6. He is before them and behind them, Isa. lii. 12, and chap. lviii. 8. He is on the right hand of his people, and he is on the left hand of his people, Ps. xvi. 8, cxxi. 5, cxviii. 15, 16; Exod. xiv. 22, 29. God is round about his people, Ps. xxxiv. 7, cxxv. 2. And God is in the midst of his people, Zech. ii. 5; Ps. xlvi. 5, xii. 6. Oh! the safety, the security of the poor people of God! for God is above his people and beneath them, he is under them and over them, he is before them and behind them, he is in the front and in the rear, and he is round about them and in the midst of them. But,

(18.) The eighteenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, *to live every day in a fresh, choice, and frequent exercise of grace.* Consult these scriptures, Ps. xci. 2–4; Jer. xxxix. 17, 18; Micah vii. 7–9; Ps. xl. 1, 2; Hab. ii. 1–4; Jer. xxx. 21. That

man that lives daily in an exercise of grace, that man lives every day in heaven on this side heaven, whatever affliction or judgment he is under.

(19.) The nineteenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, *to quicken up your hearts to seek the Lord by extraordinary ways and means*, viz., by fasting and prayer. Consult these scriptures, Num. xvi. 46, *seq.*; Ps. cvi. 23, 29, 30; Isa. xxii. 2–5, 12, 13; Jonah iii. 5, *seq.*; 2 Chron. xii. 2–7; 1 Kings xxi. 21, *seq.*; Joel ii. 12–17. But,

(20.) The twentieth, and so the last, lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, *to prepare for death; it is to be in actual readiness to die.* Ah, friends! every ache, every pain, every disease, is one of death's warning pieces. There is not a headache, not a toothache, not a gripe, not a grief, not a fall, not a wrench, not a plague-sore, but is a divine warning to man to prepare to die. It is a solemn work to die; and therefore we had need prepare to die. It is a work that is to be done but once; and therefore we had need prepare to do that work well that is to be done but once. In this world we hear often, and pray often, and read often, and meditate often, and eat often, and drink often, and that which is worst, we sin often; but we must die but once, Job xiv. 14, Heb. ix. 27. Death will try all our graces, and all our experiences, and all our evidences, and all our comforts, and all our attainments, and all our enjoyments; and therefore we had need to prepare to die.[1] Though there is nothing more certain than death, yet there is nothing more uncertain than, (1.) the time when we shall die; (2.) the place where we shall die; and, (3.) the manner how we shall die: as whether we shall die a sudden death, or a lingering death, or a violent death; or whether we shall fall by the sword abroad, or by famine or pestilence at home, or whether we shall fall by this disease or that; and therefore we had need be always in an actual readiness to die. No man shall die the sooner, but much the easier and the better, for preparing to die; and therefore let us always have our loins girt and our lamps burning. As death leaves us, so judgment will find us; and therefore we have very great cause to secure our interest in Christ, a changed nature, and a pardon in our bosoms, that so we might have nothing to do but to die. Except we prepare to die, all other preparations will do us no good. In a word, death is a change, a great change; it is the last change till the resurrection; it is lasting, yea, an everlasting change; for it puts a man into an eternal condition of happiness or misery; it is an universal change; all persons must pass under this flaming sword. That statute law, 'Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return,' will sooner or later take hold on all mortals, Gen. iii. 18; and therefore it highly concerns us to prepare for death.[2]

And thus I have shewn you these lessons that you are to learn by the rod. The Lord grant that your souls may fall under those fresh, those choice, those full, and those constant influences and communica-

[1] He that would see more of this, may read my 'String of Pearls,' and the funeral sermon that is at the end of my book of Assurance. [The former, 'String of Pearls,' is given in Vol. I.; the latter, 'The Believer's Last Day his Best Day,' is given in Vol. VI. —G.]

[2] Cf. commencement of Brooks's Will, as given in our Memoir, Vol. I. page lxxxi. —G.

tions of his Holy Spirit, as may enable you to take out those twenty lessons that I have laid open before you. I confess the epistle is large, but do but consider your own conditions, and the present dispensations under which we are cast, and then I suppose you will not call it by the name of a tedious epistle.

Dear friends, the following discourse on closet prayer I heartily recommend to your serious perusal. I have many reasons to hope, that when you have once read it over, you will be more in love with closet prayer than ever, and that you will set a higher price upon closet prayer than ever, and that you will make a better and fuller improvement of closet prayer than ever yet you have done. Consider what I say in my epistle to the reader, and labour so to manage this little treatise, that now I put into your hands, that God may be glorified, your own souls edified, comforted, and encouraged in the ways of the Lord, and that you may be 'my crown and joy, in the great day of our Lord Jesus,' 1 Thes. ii. 19, 20. So wishing that 'the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush' may abide upon you and yours for ever, I take leave and rest, dear friend, your soul's servant in our dear Lord Jesus,

THOMAS BROOKS.

TO THE READER.

CHRISTIAN READER,—The epistle dedicatory being occasionally[1] so large, I shall do little more than give thee the grounds and reasons of sending forth this little piece into the world, especially in such a day as this is. Now, my reasons are these :

1. *First,* Because God by his present dispensations calls more loudly for closet prayer now, than he hath done in those last twenty years that are now passed over our heads. See more of this in the 16th argument for closet prayer.

2. *Secondly,* Because I have several reasons to fear that many Christians do not clearly nor fully understand the necessity, excellency, and usefulness of this subject, and that many, oh that I could not say any, live in too great a neglect of this indispensable duty, and that more than a few, for want of light, err in the very practice of it.

3. *Thirdly,* For the refreshing, support, and encouragement of all those churches of Christ that walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, &c., especially that particular church to whom I stand related.

4. *Fourthly,* To preserve and keep up the power of religion and godliness both in men's houses, hearts, and lives. The power of religion and godliness lives, thrives, or dies, as closet prayer lives, thrives, or dies. Godliness never rises to a higher pitch than when men keep closest to their closets, &c.

5. *Fifthly,* Because closet prayer is a most sovereign remedy, a most precious antidote of God's own prescribing, against the plague that now rageth in the midst of us, 1 Kings viii. 37–39, &c.

6. *Sixthly,* Because every man is that really which he is secretly. Never tell me, how handsomely, how neatly,[2] how bravely, this or that man acts his part before others ; but tell me, if thou canst, how he acts his part before God in his closet ; for the man is that certainly, that he is secretly. There are many that sweat upon the stage that are key-cold[3] in their closets.

7. *Seventhly,* Though many worthies have done worthily upon all other parts of prayer, yet there are none either of a former or later date, that have fallen under my eye, that have written any treatise on this subject. I have not a little wondered that so many eminent writers

[1] = 'Suitably to the occasion.'—G. [2] 'Purely.' Cf. Sibbes' Glossary.—G.
[3] Another Shakespearian word ; 'poor key-cold figure,' Richard III., i. 2.—G.

should pass over this great and princely duty of closet-prayer, either with a few brief touches, or else in a very great silence. If several Bodies of Divinity are consulted, you will find that all they say clearly and distinctly as to closet-prayer, may be brought into a very narrow compass, if not into a nut-shell. I have also inquired of several old disciples, whether among all the thousand sermons that they have heard in their days, that ever they have heard one sermon on closet-prayer? and they have answered, No. I have also inquired of them, whether ever they had read any treatise on that subject? and they have answered, No. And truly this hath been no small encouragement to me, to make an offer of my mite; and if this small attempt of mine shall be so blessed, as to provoke others that have better heads, and hearts, and hands, than any I have, to do Christ and his people more service, in the handling of this choice point in a more copious way than what I have been able to reach unto, I shall therein rejoice.

8. *Eighthly*, and lastly, That favour, that good acceptance and fair quarter that my other poor labours have found, not only in this nation, but in other countries also, hath put me upon putting pen to paper once more; and I hope that the good will of him that 'dwelt in the bush,' will rest upon this, as it hath to the glory of free grace rested upon my former endeavours. I could add other reasons, but let these suffice.

Good reader, when thou art in thy closet, pray hard for a poor, weak, worthless worm, that I may be found faithful and fruitful to the death, that so at last I may receive a crown of life. So wishing thee all happiness both in this lower and in that upper world, I rest,

Thine in our dear Lord Jesus,

THOMAS BROOKS.

THE PRIVY KEY OF HEAVEN;

OR, A DISCOURSE OF CLOSET PRAYER.

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.—MAT. VI. 6.

THESE words of our Saviour are plain, and to be taken literally, and not allegorically, for he speaketh of shutting the door of the chamber. In this chapter there is a manifest opposition between the Pharisees praying in the synagogues and corners of the streets, and others praying in secret.

In the text you have a positive precept for every Christian to pray alone: 'But thou, when *thou* prayest.' He saith not, when *you* pray, but *thou*, 'when *thou* prayest, enter into *thy* closet,' &c., as speaking not so much of a joint duty of many praying together, as of a duty which each person is to do alone. The command in the text sends us as well to the closet as to the church; and he is a hypocrite in grain that chooses the one and neglects the other; for thereby he tells the world he cares for neither, he makes conscience of neither. He that puts on a religious habit abroad to gain himself a great name among men, and at the same time lives like an atheist at home, shall at the last be uncased by God, and presented before all the world for a most egregious hypocrite.

Bellarmine[1] and some others turn the text into an allegory. They say that in these words there are two allegories. First, the chamber door is the sense, 'shut the door,' that is, say they, thy sense, lest vain imaginations and worldly thoughts distract thy mind in praying. Secondly, the door, say they, is our mouth, 'shut thy door,' that is, thy lips, say they, and let thy prayer be like the prayer of Hannah, conceived in thy mind, but not uttered with thy mouth. It is usual with papists and other monkish men that lie in wait to deceive, to turn the blessed Scriptures into a nose of wax, under pretence of allegories and mysteries. Origen was a great admirer of allegories.[2] By the strength

[1] Bellarm. de *Sanct.* lib. iii. cap. iv., &c.
[2] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. vi. cap. viii.

of his parts and wanton wit, he turned most of the Scriptures into allegories; and by the just judgment of God upon him, he foolishly understood and absurdly applied that Mat. xix. 12 literally, 'Some have made themselves chaste for the kingdom of heaven,' and so gelded himself. And indeed he might as well have plucked out one of his eyes upon the same account, because Christ saith, 'It is better to go to heaven with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire,' Mat. xviii. 9. In all ages heretics have commonly defended their heresies by translating of scriptures into allegories. The apostle speaks of such as, denying the resurrection of the body, turn all the testimonies of the resurrection into an allegory, meaning thereby only the spiritual resurrection of the soul from sin, of which sort was Hymeneus and Philetus, who destroyed the faith of some, saying 'the resurrection was past already,' 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18. And are there not many among us that turn the whole history of the Bible into an allegory, and that turn Christ, and sin, and death, and the soul, and hell, and heaven, and all into an allegory? Many have and many do miserably pervert the Scriptures by turning them into vain and groundless allegories. Some wanton wits[1] have expounded paradise to be the soul, man to be the mind, the woman to be the sense, the serpent to be delight, the tree of knowledge of good and evil to be wisdom, and the rest of the trees to be the virtues and endowments of the mind. O friends! it is dangerous to bring in allegories where the Scripture doth not clearly and plainly warrant them, and to take those words figuratively which should be taken properly.

The word ταμιεῖον that is in the text rendered *closet*, hath only three most usual significations amongst Greek authors. First, it may be taken for a secret chamber, or close and locked parlour; secondly, for a safe or cupboard to lay victuals in; thirdly, for a locked chest or cupboard wherein treasure usually is reserved.

The best and most judicious interpreters that I have cast mine eye upon, both of a former and later date, do all expound my text of private prayer in retired places; and with them I close; and so the main doctrine that I shall gather from the words is this:

Doct. That closet prayer or private prayer is an indispensable duty, that Christ himself hath laid upon all that are not willing to lie under the woful brand of being hypocrites.

I beseech you seriously to lay to heart these five things:

1. *First, If any prayer be a duty, then secret prayer must needs be a duty;* for secret prayer is as much prayer as any other prayer is prayer; and secret prayer prepares and fits the soul for family prayer, and for public prayer. Secret prayer sweetly inclines and strongly disposes a Christian to all other religious duties and services. *Ergo*,—But,

2. *Secondly*, If secret prayer be not an indispensable duty that lies upon thee, *by what authority doth conscience so upbraid thee, and so accuse thee, and so condemn thee, and so terrify thee, as it often doth for the neglect of this duty?* But,

3. Thirdly, *Was it ever the way or method of God to promise again and again a reward, an open reward for that work or service which himself never commanded?* Surely no. Now, to this duty of secret prayer, the Lord hath again and again promised an open reward, Mat.

[1] Philo Judæus, and others of a later date.

vi. 6, 18. And therefore without all peradventure this is a duty incumbent upon all Christians.

4. Fourthly, Our Saviour in the text *takes it for granted that every child of God will be frequent in praying to his heavenly Father;* and therefore he encourages them so much the more in the work of secret prayer. 'When you pray;' as if he had said, I know you can as well hear without ears, and live without food, and fight without hands, and walk without feet, as you are able to live without prayer. And therefore when you go to wait on God, or to give your heavenly Father a visit, 'Enter into your closet, and shut your doors,' &c.

5. Fifthly, If closet prayer be not an indispensable duty that Christ hath laid upon all his people, *why doth Satan so much oppose it? why doth he so industriously and so unweariedly labour to discourage Christians in it, and to take off Christians from it?* Certainly, Satan would never make such a fierce and constant war as he doth upon private prayer, were it not a necessary duty, a real duty, and a soul-enriching duty. But more of this you will find in the following discourse; and therefore let this touch suffice for the present, &c.

Now, these five things do very clearly and evidently demonstrate that secretly and solitarily to hold intercourse with God is the undoubted duty of every Christian. But for a more full opening and confirmation of this great and important point, I shall lay down these twenty arguments or considerations, &c.

[1.] *First, The most eminent saints, both in the Old and New Testament, have applied themselves to private prayer.* Moses was alone in the mount with God forty days and forty nights, Exod. xxxiv. 28. So Abraham fills his mouth with arguments, and reasons the case out alone with God in prayer, to prevent Sodom's desolation and destruction, and never leaves off pleading and praying till he had brought God down from fifty to ten, Gen. xviii. 22–32; and in Gen. xxi. 33, you have Abraham again at his private prayers: 'And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God.' Why did Abraham plant a grove, but that he might have a most private place to pray and pour out his soul before the Lord in? So Isaac: Gen. xxiv. 63, 'And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at even-tide.' The Hebrew word *lasuach*, that is here rendered *meditate*, signifies to pray as well as to meditate, and so it is often used. It is a comprehensive word, that takes in both prayer and meditation. So you shall find Jacob at his private prayer: Gen. xxxii. 24–28, 'And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.' When Jacob was all alone, and in a dark night, and when his joints were out of joint, he so wrestles and weeps, and weeps and wrestles in private prayer, that as a prince at last he prevails with God, Hosea xii. 3, 4. So David, Ps. lv. 16, 17, 'As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud; and he shall hear my voice.' So Daniel was three times a-day in private prayer: Dan. vi. 10, 'Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and, his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a-day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.' Daniel had accustomed himself

to private prayer; he went to his closet before he went to his public employment and state affairs; and at his return to dinner, he turned first into his chamber to serve his God and refresh his soul before he sat down to feast his body; and at the end of the day, when he had despatched his business with men, he made it his business to wait upon God in his chamber. So Jonah keeps up private prayer when he was in the fish's belly, yea, when he was in the belly of hell, Jonah ii. 1, 2, &c. So we have Elijah at prayer under the juniper tree, 1 Kings xix. 4; so Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 13. Now, Hannah she speaks in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. The very soul of prayer lies in the pouring out of the soul before God, as Hannah did, ver. 15. Neither was Rebekah a stranger to this duty, who, upon the babe's struggling in her womb, went to inquire of the Lord, Gen. xxv. 22; that is, she went to some secret place to pray, saith Calvin, Musculus, Mercerus, and others. So Saul is no sooner converted, but presently he falls upon private prayer: Acts ix. 11, 'And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth.' Though he was a strict Pharisee, yet he never prayed to purpose before, nor never prayed in private before. The Pharisees used to pray in the corners of the streets, and not in the corners of their houses. And after his conversion he was frequently in private prayer, as you may see by comparing of these scriptures together, Rom. i. 9; Eph. i. 15, 16; Philip. i. 3, 4; 2 Tim. i. 3. So Epaphras was a warm man in closet prayer, Philip. iv. 12, 13; so Cornelius had devoted himself to private prayer, Acts x. 2, 4; and so Peter gets up to the house-top to pray: ver. 9, 'On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the house top to pray, about the sixth hour.' Peter got up upon the leads, not only to avoid distraction, but that he might be the more secret in his private devotion. Eusebius tells us of James called Justus, that his knees were grown hard and brawny with kneeling so much in private prayer.[1] And Nazianzen reports of his sister Gorgonia, that her knees seemed to cleave to the earth by her often praying in private. And Gregory saith of his aunt Trucilla, that her elbows was as hard as horn by often leaning upon her desk at private prayer. I have read of a devout person, who, when the set time for his private devotion was come, whatever company he was in, he would break from them with this neat and handsome come off, 'I have a friend that stays for me; farewell.' And there was once a great lady of this land, who would frequently withdraw from the company of lords and ladies of great quality, who came to visit her, rather than she would lose her set times of waiting upon God in her closet; she would, as they called it, rudely take her leave of them, that so she might in private attend the Lord of lords. She would spare what time she could to express her favours, civilities, and courtesies among her relations and friends; but she would never suffer them to rob God of his time, nor her soul of that comfort and communion which she used to enjoy when she was with God in her closet.[2] And indeed, one hour's communion with God in one's closet,

[1] H. E., ii.—G.

[2] Lady Brooke, the friend of Sibbes. Cf. Parkhurst's 'Sermon' on her death.—G.

is to be preferred before the greatest and best company in the world. And there was a child of a Christian gentlewoman, that was so given to prayer from its infancy, that before it could well speak, it would use to get alone and go to prayer; and as it grew, it was more frequent in prayer and retiring of itself from company; and he would ask his mother very strange questions, far above the capacity of one of his years; but at last, when this child was but five years old, and whipping of his top, on a sudden he flung away his scourge-stick and top, and ran to his mother, and with great joy said unto her, 'Mother, I must go to God; will you go with me?' She answered, 'My dear child, how dost thou know thou shalt go to God?' He answered, 'God hath told me so, for I love God, and God loves me.' She answered, 'Dear child, I must go when God pleaseth. But why wilt thou not stay with me?' The child answered, 'I will not stay; I must go to God.' And the child did not live above a month after, but never cared for play more; but falling sick, he would always be saying that he must go to God, he must go to God; and thus sometimes 'out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God hath perfected praise,' Mat. xxi. 16. Certainly such persons will be ripe for heaven betimes who begin betimes to seek God in a closet, in a corner. And Eusebius reports of Constantine the emperor, that every day he used to shut up himself in some secret place in his palace, and there, on bended knees, did make his devout prayers and soliloquies to God. 'My God and I are good company,' said famous Dr Sibbes.[1] A man whose soul is conversant with God in a closet, in a hole, behind the door, or in a desert, a den, a dungeon, shall find more real pleasure, more choice delight, and more full content, than in the palace of a prince. By all these famous instances, you see that the people of God in all ages have addicted themselves to private prayer. O friends! these pious examples should be very awakening, very convincing, and very encouraging to you. Certainly it is as much your duty as it is your glory to follow these pious patterns that are now set before you. Witness these following scriptures: Prov. ii. 20, 'That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous;' 1 Cor. xi. 1, 'Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ;' Philip. iii. 17, 'Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample'; Philip. iv. 9, 'Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you'; 1 Thes. i. 6, 'And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction;' Heb. vi. 12, 'That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.' So 2 Tim. iii. 10–12, 14, Titus ii. 7. It was an excellent law that the Ephesians made, viz., that men should propound to themselves the best patterns, and ever bear in mind some eminent man.[2] Bad men are wonderful in love with bad examples, Jer. xliv. 16, 17. The Indian, hearing that his ancestors were gone to hell, said that then he would go thither too. Some men have a mind to go to hell for company's sake. Oh that we were as much in

[1] One of a number of tender and pleasant memories of the heavenly Sibbes, found in contemporary writings. Brooks uses it in his 'Ark for all God's Noahs' also. See page 80 *ante*.—G.

[2] Præcepta docent, exempla movent. [As before.—G.]

love with the examples of good men as others are in love with the examples of bad men; and then we should be oftener in our closets than now we are! Oh that our eyes were more fixed on the pious examples of all that have in them *aliquid Christi*, anything of Christ, as Bucer spake! Shall we love to look upon the pictures of our friends; and shall we not love to look upon the pious examples of those that are the lively and lovely picture of Christ? The pious examples of others should be the looking-glasses by which we should dress ourselves. He is the best and wisest Christian that writes after the fairest Scripture copy, that imitates those Christians that are most eminent in grace, and that have been most exercised in closet prayer, and in the most secret duties of religion.

Jerome having read the life and death of Hilarion, one that lived most Christianly, and died most comfortably, folded up the book, saying, Well, Hilarion shall be the champion that I will follow; his good life shall be my example, and his godly death my president.[1] It is brave to live and die by the examples of the most eminent saints. But,

[2.] *Secondly.* Consider, *when Christ was on earth, he did much exercise himself in secret prayer;* he was often with God alone, as you may see in these famous scriptures: Mat. xiv. 23, 'And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray; and when the evening was come, he was there alone.' Christ's choosing solitudes for private prayer, doth not only hint to us the danger of distraction and deviation of thoughts in prayer, but how necessary it is for us to choose the most convenient places we can for private prayers. Our own fickleness and Satan's restlessness calls upon us to get into such corners, where we may most freely pour out our souls into the bosom of God: Mark i. 35, 'And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.' As the morning time is the fittest time for prayer, so solitary places are the fittest places for prayer: Mark vi. 46, 'And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.' He that would pray to purpose, had need be quiet when he is alone: Luke v. 16, 'And he withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed.' (*Greek*, He was departing and praying) to give us to understand that he did thus often. When Christ was neither exercised in teaching nor in working of miracles, he was then very intent on private prayer: Luke vi. 12, 'And it came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.' Did Christ spend whole nights in private prayer to save our souls; and shall we think it much to spend an hour or two in the day for the furtherance of the internal and eternal welfare of our souls? Luke xxi. 37, 'And in the day-time he was teaching in the temple, and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives.' Christ frequently joins praying and preaching together, and those whom Christ hath joined together, let no man presume to put asunder: Luke xxii. 39, 41, 44, 45, 'And he came out, and went as he was wont to the mount of Olives, and his disciples also followed him. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down and prayed. And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as

[1] 'Precedent.'—G.

it were great drops of blood' (clotted or congealed blood) 'falling down to the ground' (never was garden watered before or since with blood as this was). 'And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow.' Ah! what sad pieces of vanity are the best of men in an hour of trial and temptation! These very men, that a little before did stoutly profess and promise that they would never leave him nor forsake him, and that they would to prison for Christ, and die for Christ, yet when the day of trial came, they could not so much as watch with him one hour; they had neither eyes to see nor hands to wipe off Christ's bloody sweat; so John vi. 15–17. Thus you see, by all these famous instances, that Christ was frequent in private prayer. Oh that we would daily propound to ourselves this noble pattern for our imitation, and make it our business, our work, our heaven, to write after this blessed copy that Christ hath set us, viz., to be much with God alone. Certainly Christianity is nothing else but an imitation of the divine nature, a reducing of a man's self to the image of God, in which he was created 'in righteousness and true holiness.' A Christian's whole life should be nothing but a visible representation of Christ. The heathens had this notion amongst them, as Lactantius reports, that the way to honour their gods was to be like them. Sure I am that the highest way of honouring Christ is to be like to Christ: 1 John ii. 6, 'He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked.' Oh that this blessed Scripture might always lie warm upon our hearts. Christ is the sun, and all the watches of our lives should be set by the dial of his motion. Christ is a pattern of patterns; his example should be to us instead of a thousand examples. It is not only our liberty, but our duty and glory, to follow Christ in all his moral virtues absolutely. Other patterns be imperfect and defective, but Christ is a perfect pattern; and of all his children, they are the happiest that come nearest to this perfect pattern.

Heliogabalus loved his children the better for resembling him in sin. But Christ loves his children the more for resembling him in sanctity. I have read of some springs that change the colour of the cattle that drink of them into the colour of their own waters, as Du Bartas sings:

> 'Cerona, Xanth, and Cephisus do make
> The thirsty flocks, that of their waters take,
> Black, red, and white; and near the crimson deep,
> The Arabian fountain maketh crimson sheep."

Certainly, Jesus Christ is such a fountain, in which whosoever bathes, and of which whosoever drinks, shall be changed into the same likeness, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Quest. But why was our Lord Jesus so much in private prayer? Why was he so often with God alone?

Ans. 1. *First, It was to put a very high honour and value upon private prayer;* it was to enhance and raise the price of this duty. Men naturally are very apt and prone to have low and undervaluing thoughts of secret prayer. But Christ, by exercising himself so frequently in it, hath put an everlasting honour and an inestimable value upon it. But,

Ans. 2. *Secondly,* He was much in private prayer, he was often with God alone, *that he might not be seen of men, and that he might avoid*

all shows and appearances of ostentation and popular applause. He that hath commanded us to abstain from all appearances of evil, 1 Thes. v. 22, would not himself, when he was in this world, venture upon the least appearance of evil. Christ was very shy of every thing that did but look like sin; he was very shy of the very show and shadow of pride or vain-glory.

Ans. 3. *Thirdly, To avoid interruptions in the duty.* Secresy is no small advantage to the serious and lively carrying on of a private duty. Interruptions and disturbances from without are oftentimes quench-coals to private prayer. The best Christians do but bungle when they meet with interruptions in their private devotions.

Ans. 4. *Fourthly, To set us such a blessed pattern and gracious example, that we should never please nor content ourselves with public prayers only, nor with family prayers only, but that we should also apply ourselves to secret prayer, to closet prayer.* Christ was not always in public, nor always in his family, but he was often in private with God alone, that by his own example he might encourage us to be often with God in secret; and happy are they that tread in his steps, and that write after his copy.

Ans. 5. *Fifthly, That he might approve himself to our understandings and consciences to be a most just and faithful High Priest,* Heb. ii. 17, John xvii. Christ was wonderful faithful and careful in both parts of his priestly office, viz., satisfaction and intercession; he was his people's only spokesman. Ah! how earnest, how frequent was he in pouring out prayers, and tears, and sighs, and groans for his people in secret, when he was in this world, Heb. v. 7. And now he is in heaven, he is still a-making intercession for them, Heb. vii. 25.

Ans. 6. *Sixthly, To convince us that his Father hears and observes our private prayers, and bottles up all our secret tears, and that he is not a stranger to our closet desires, wrestlings, breathings, hungerings, and thirstings.*

[3.] *Thirdly,* Consider *that the ordinary exercising of yourselves in secret prayer, is that which will distinguish you from hypocrites, who do all they do to be seen of men:*[1] Mat. vi. 1, 2, 'Take heed that you do not your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.' Self is the only oil that makes the chariot-wheels of the hypocrite move in all religious concernments. Ver. 5, 'And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to stand praying in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.' Ver. 16, 'Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.' Thus you see that these hypocrites look more at men than at God in all their duties. When they give alms,

[1] They say of the nightingale, that when she is solitary in the woods, she is careless of her notes, but composes herself more quaintly and elegantly, if she conceives there be any auditors, or if she be near houses. Just so it is with hypocrites in religious duties.

the trumpet must sound; when they pray, it must be in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets; and when they fasted, they disfigured their faces that they might appear unto men to fast. Hypocrites live upon the praises and applauses of men. Naturalists report of the Chelydonian stone,[1] that it will retain its virtue no longer than it is enclosed in gold. So hypocrites will keep up their duties no longer than they are fed, and encouraged, and enclosed with the golden praises and applauses of men. Hypocrites are like blazing stars, which, so long as they are fed with vapours, shine as if they were fixed stars; but let the vapours dry up, and presently they vanish and disappear.

Closet duty speaks out most sincerity. He prays with a witness that prays without a witness. The more sincere the soul is, the more in closet duty the soul will be, Job xxxi. 33. Where do you read in all the Scripture, that Pharaoh, or Saul, or Judas, or Demas, or Simon Magus, or the scribes and pharisees, did ever use to pour out their souls before the Lord in secret? Secret prayer is not the hypocrite's ordinary walk, his ordinary work or trade. There is great cause to fear that his heart was never right with God, whose whole devotion is spent among men, or among many; or else our Saviour, in drawing the hypocrite's picture, would never have made this to be the very cast of his countenance, as he doth in Mat. vi. 5. It is very observable, that Christ commands his disciples, that they should not be as the hypocrites. It is one thing to be hypocrites, and it is another thing to be as the hypocrites. Christ would not have his people to look like hypocrites, nor to be like to hypocrites. It is only sincerity that will enable a man to make a trade of private prayer. In praying with many, there are many things that may bribe and provoke a carnal heart, as pride, vain-glory, love of applause, or to get a name. An hypocrite, in all his duties, trades more for a good name than for a good life, for a good report than for a good conscience; like fiddlers, that are more careful in tuning their instruments, than in composing their lives. But in private prayer there is no such trade to be driven. But,

[4.] *Fourthly,* Consider *that in secret we may more freely, and fully, and safely unbosom our souls to God than we can in the presence of many or a few.* Hence the husband is to mourn apart, and the wife apart, Zech. xii. 12–14, not only to shew the soundness of their sorrow, but also to shew their sincerity by their secresy. They must mourn apart, that their sins may not be disclosed nor discovered one to another. Here they are severed to shew that they wept not for company's sake, but for their own particular sins, by which they had pierced and crucified the Lord of glory. In secret, a Christian may descend into such particulars, as in public or before others he will not, he may not, he ought not, to mention. Ah! how many Christians are there who would blush and be ashamed to walk in the streets, and to converse with sinners or saints, should but those infirmities, enormities, and wickednesses be written in their foreheads, or known to others, which they freely and fully lay open to God in secret. There are many sins which many men have fallen into before conversion and since conversion, which, should they be known to the world, would make themselves to stink, and religion to stink, and their profession to stink in the nostrils

[1] That is, from Chelidoniæ Insulæ.—*Pliny,* v. 38.—G.

of all that know them. Yea, should those weaknesses and wickednesses be published upon the house-tops, which many are guilty of before grace received, or since grace received, how would weak Christians be staggered, young comers on in the ways of God discouraged, and many mouths of blasphemy opened, and many sinners' hearts hardened against the Lord, his ways, reproofs, and the things of their own peace; yea, how would Satan's banner be displayed, and his kingdom strengthened, and himself infinitely pleased and delighted! It is an infinite mercy and condescension in God to lay a law of restraint upon Satan, who else would be the greatest blab in all the world. It would be mirth and music to him to be still a-laying open the follies and weaknesses of the saints.

Ambrose brings in the devil boasting against Christ, and challenging Judas as his own. 'He is not thine, Lord Jesus, he is mine: his thoughts beat for me; he eats with thee, but is fed by me; he takes bread from thee, but money from me; he drinks with thee, and sells thy blood to me.' There is not a sin that a saint commits, but Satan would trumpet it out to all the world, if God would but give him leave. No man that is in his right wits, will lay open to every one his bodily infirmities, weaknesses, diseases, ailments, griefs, &c., but to some near relation, or bosom friend, or able physician. So no man that is in his right wits will lay open to every one his soul-infirmities, weaknesses, diseases, ailments, griefs, &c., but to the Lord, or to some particular person that is wise, faithful, and able to contribute something to his soul's relief. Should a Christian but lay open or rip up all his follies and vanities to the world, how sadly would some deride him and scorn him! and how severely and bitterly would others censure him and judge him! &c. When David was alone in the cave, then he poured out his complaint to God, and shewed before him his trouble, Ps. cxlii. 2. And when Job was all alone, then his eyes poured out tears to God, Job xvi. 20. There is no hazard, no danger, in ripping up of all before God in a corner, but there may be a great deal of hazard and danger in ripping up of all before men.

[5.] *Fifthly, Secret duties shall have open rewards.*[1] Mat. vi. 6, 'And thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.' So, ver. 18, God will reward his people here in part, and hereafter in all perfection. He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him in a corner. They that sow in tears secretly, shall reap in joy openly. Private prayer shall be rewarded before men and angels publicly. How openly did God reward Daniel for his secret prayer! Dan. vi. 10, 23–28. Mordecai privately discovered a plot of treason against the person of king Ahasuerus, and he is rewarded openly, Esther ii. 21–23, with chap. 6th. Darius, before he came to the kingdom, received privately a garment for a gift of one Syloson; and when he came to be a king, he rewarded him openly with the command of his country Samus.[2] God, in the great day, will recompense his people before all the world, for every secret prayer, and secret tear, and secret sigh, and secret groan that hath come from his people. God, in the great day, will declare to men and angels, how often his people have been in pouring out their

[1] Eccles. xii. 14; 2 Cor. v. 10; Rev. xxii. 12; Ps. cxxvi. 5; Luke xiv. 14; Mat. xxv. 34, 37.

[2] Samos. Told by Herodotus, iii. 39, 139-149, vi. 13; Strabo, xiv.—G.

souls before him in such and such holes, corners, and secret places; and accordingly he will reward them.

Ah, Christians! did you really believe this, and seriously dwell on this, you would,

(1.) Walk more thankfully.

(2.) Work more cheerfully.

(3.) Suffer more patiently.

(4.) Fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil, more courageously.

(5.) Lay out yourselves for God, his interest and glory, more freely.

(6.) Live with what providence hath cut out for your portion, more quietly and contentedly. And,

(7.) You would be in private prayer more frequently, more abundantly.

[6.] *Sixthly*, Consider *that God hath usually let out himself most to his people when they have been in secret, when they have been alone at the throne of grace.*[1] Oh the sweet meltings, the heavenly warmings, the blessed cheerings, the glorious manifestations, and the choice communion with God, that Christians have found when they have been alone with God in a corner, in a closet, behind the door! When had Daniel that vision and comfortable message, that blessed news, by the angel, that he was 'greatly beloved,' but when he was all alone at prayer? Dan. ix. 20–23, 'And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God, for the holy mountain of my God; yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation; and he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved. Therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.' Whilst Daniel was at private prayer, God, by the angel Gabriel, reveals to him the secret of his counsel, concerning the restoration of Jerusalem, and the duration thereof, even to the Messiah; and whilst Daniel was at private prayer, the Lord appears to him, and in an extraordinary way assures him that he was 'a man greatly beloved,' or as the Hebrew *chumudoth* hath it, 'a man of desires,' that is, a man whom God's desires are towards, a man singularly beloved of God, and highly in favour with God, a man that art very pleasing and delightful to God. God loves to lade the wings of private prayer with the sweetest, choicest, and chiefest blessings. Ah! how often hath God kissed a poor Christian at the beginning of private prayer, and spoke peace to him in the midst of private prayer, and filled him with light and joy and assurance upon the close of private prayer? And so Cornelius is highly commended and graciously rewarded upon the account of his private prayer: Acts x. 1–4, 'There was a certain man in Cæsarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house; which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always: he saw in a vision evidently, about the ninth

[1] O Lord, I never come to thee but by thee; I never go from thee without thee.—*Bernard.*

hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? and he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.' Vers. 30, 31, 'And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour' (that is, until three o'clock in the afternoon, ver. 3), 'and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, Thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.' Mark, as he was praying in his house, namely, by himself alone, a man in bright clothing—that was an angel in man's shape, ver. 3—appeared to him, and said, 'Cornelius, thy prayer is heard.' He doth not mean only that prayer which he made when he fasted and humbled himself before the Lord, vers. 30, 31; but, as verses 2, 3, 4 shew, his prayers, his prayers which he made alone. For it seems none else were with him then, for he only saw that man in bright clothing; and to him alone the angel addressed his present speech, saying, 'Cornelius, Thy prayers are heard, vers. 4, 31. Here you see that Cornelius his private prayers are not only heard, but kindly remembered, and graciously accepted, and gloriously rewarded. Praying Cornelius is not only remembered by God, but he is also visited, sensibly and evidently, by an angel, and assured that his private prayers and good deeds are an odour, a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing to God. And so when had Peter his vision but when he was praying alone on the house-top? Acts x. 9–13, 'On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew near unto the city, Peter went up unto the house-top to pray, about the sixth hour. And he became very hungry, and would have eaten; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, and saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth, wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.' When Peter was upon the house-top at prayer alone, then he fell into a trance, and he saw heaven opened; and then he had his spirit raised, his mind elevated, and all the faculties of his soul filled with a divine revelation. And so when Paul was at prayer alone, Acts ix. 12, he saw in a vision a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him that he might receive his sight. Paul had not been long at private prayer before it was revealed to him that he was a chosen vessel, and before he was filled with the gifts, graces, and comforts of the Holy Ghost. And when John was alone in the isle of Patmos, 'for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ'—whither he was banished by Domitian, a most cruel emperor[1]—then he had a glorious sight of the Son of man, and then the Lord discovered to him most deep and profound mysteries, both concerning the present and future state of the church, to the end of the world. And when John was weeping, in private prayer doubtless, then the sealed book was opened to him. So when Daniel was at private prayer, God despatches a heavenly messenger to him, and his errand was to open more clearly and fully the blessed Scripture to him. Some comfortable and encouraging knowledge this holy man of God had

[1] Euseb. lib. iii. cap. xviii, Rev. i. 9, *seq.*; v. 1–9.

attained unto before by his frequent and constant study in the word, and this eggs him on to private prayer, and private prayer posts an angel from heaven to give him a clearer and fuller light.[1] Private prayer is a golden key to unlock the mysteries of the word unto us. The knowledge of many choice and blessed truths are but the returns of private prayer. The word most dwells richly in their hearts who are most in pouring out their hearts before God in their closets. When Bonaventura, that seraphical doctor, as some call him, was asked by Aquinas from what books and helps he derived such holy and divine expressions and contemplations, he pointed to a crucifix, and said, '*Iste est liber*, &c., Prostrate in prayer at the feet of this image, my soul receiveth greater light from heaven than from all study and disputation.' Though this be a monkish tradition and superstitious fiction, yet some improvement may be made of it. Certainly that Christian or that minister that in private prayer lies most at the feet of Jesus Christ, he shall understand most of the mind of Christ in the gospel, and he shall have most of heaven and the things of his own peace brought down into his heart.

There is no service wherein Christians have such a near, familiar, and friendly intercourse with God as in this of private prayer; neither is there any service wherein God doth more delight to make known his truth and faithfulness, his grace and goodness, his mercy and bounty, his beauty and glory to poor souls, than this of private prayer. Luther professeth, 'That he profited more in the knowledge of the Scripture by private prayer in a short space, than he did by study in a longer space,'[2] as John by weeping in a corner got the sealed book opened. Private prayer crowns God with the honour and glory that is due to his name; and God crowns private prayer with a discovery of those blessed weighty truths to his servants, that are a sealed book to others. Certainly the soul usually enjoys most communion with God in secret. When a Christian is in a wilderness, which is a very solitary place, then God delights to speak friendly and comfortably to him: Hosea ii. 14, 'Behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak friendly or comfortably to her,' or as the Hebrew hath it, 'I will speak to her heart.' When I have her alone, saith God, in a solitary wilderness, I will speak such things to her heart, as shall exceedingly cheer her, and comfort her, and even make her heart leap and dance within her.[3] A husband imparts his mind most freely and fully to his wife when she is alone; and so doth Christ to the believing soul. Oh the secret kisses, the secret embraces, the secret visits, the secret whispers, the secret cheerings, the secret sealings, the secret discoveries, &c., that God gives to his people when alone, when in a hole, when under the stairs, when behind the door, when in a dungeon! When Jeremiah was calling upon God alone in his dark dungeon, he had great and wonderful things shewed him that he knew not of, Jer. xxxiii. 1–3.

Ambrose was wont to say, 'I am never less alone, than when I am alone; for then I can enjoy the presence of my God most freely, fully, and sweetly, without interruption.'

[1] Doctor [William] Ames got his learning by private prayer; and so did Solomon his wisdom. [2] *Bene orasse, est bene studuisse.*—Luther.

[3] *Nunquam minus solus, quam cum solus;* never less alone, than when alone, said the heathen. And may not a saint say so much more that hath communion with God?

And it was a most sweet and divine saying of Bernard, 'O saint, knowest thou not,' saith he, 'that thy husband Christ is bashful, and will not be familiar in company? Retire thyself therefore by prayer and meditation into thy closet or the fields, and there thou shalt have Christ's embraces.'

A gentlewoman being at private prayer and meditation in her parlour, had such sweet, choice, and full enjoyments of God, that she cried out, 'Oh that I might ever enjoy this sweet communion with God!' &c.

Christ loves to embrace his spouse, not so much in the open street, as in a closet; and certainly the gracious soul hath never sweeter views of glory, than when it is most out of the view of the world. Wise men give their best, their choicest, and their richest gifts in secret; and so doth Christ give his the best of the best, when they are in a corner, when they are all alone. But as for such as cannot spare time to seek God in a closet, to serve him in secret, they sufficiently manifest that they have little fellowship or friendship with God, whom they so seldom come at.

[7.] *Seventhly*, Consider *the time of this life is the only time for private prayer.* Heaven will admit of no secret prayer. In heaven there will be no secret sins to trouble us, nor no secret wants to pinch us, nor no secret temptations to betray us, nor no secret snares to entangle us, nor no secret enemies to supplant us. We had need live much in the practice of that duty here on earth, that we shall never be exercised in after death. Some duties that are incumbent upon us now, as praising of God, admiring of God, exalting and lifting up of God, joying and delighting in God, &c., will be for ever incumbent upon us in heaven; but this duty of private prayer, we must take our leaves of when we come to lay our heads in the dust.

[8.] *Eighthly*, Consider *the great prevalency of secret prayer.* Private prayer is *porta cœli, clavis paradisi*, the gate of heaven, a key to let us into paradise. Oh the great things that private prayer hath done with God! Ps. xxxi. 22. Oh the great mercies that have been obtained by private prayer! Ps. xxxviii. 8, 9. And oh the great threatenings that have been diverted by private prayer! And oh the great judgments that have been removed by private prayer! And oh the great judgments that have been prevented by private prayer! I have read of a malicious woman who gave herself to the devil, provided that he would do a mischief to such a neighbour, whom she mortally hated: the devil went again and again to do his errand, but at last he returns and tells her, that he could do no hurt to that man, for whenever he came, he found him either reading the Scriptures, or at private prayer. Private prayers pierces the heavens, and are commonly blessed and loaded with gracious and glorious returns from thence. Whilst Hezekiah was praying and weeping in private, God sent the prophet Isaiah to him, to assure him that his prayer was heard, and that his tears were seen, and that he would add unto his days fifteen years, Isaiah xxxviii. 5. So when Isaac was all alone meditating and praying, and treating with God for a good wife in the fields, he meets Rebekah, Gen. xxiv. 63, 64. So Jacob: Gen. xxxii. 24–28, 'And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with *him* until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not

against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? and he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.' In this scripture we have an elegant description of a duel fought between the Almighty and Jacob; and in it there are these things most observable:

(1.) *First,* We have *the combatants or duellists,* Jacob and God, who appeared in the shape or appearance of a man. He that is here said to be a man was the Son of God in human shape, as it appeareth by the whole narration, and by Hosea xii. 3–5. Now, that this man that wrestled with Jacob was indeed God, and not really man, is most evident by these reasons:

[1.] *First, Jacob desires a blessing from him,* ver. 26. Now, it is God's prerogative-royal to bless, and not angels' nor men's. *Ergo,*—

[2.] *Secondly, He calls him by the name of God;* 'thou hast power with God,' ver. 28. And saith Jacob, 'I have seen God face to face,' ver. 30. Not that he saw the majesty and essence of God: for no man can see the essential glory of God and live, Exod. xxxiii. 20, 23; but he saw God more apparently, more manifestly, more gloriously than ever he had done before. Some created shape, some glimpse of glory, Jacob saw, whereby God was pleased for the present to testify his more immediate presence, but not himself.

[3.] *Thirdly, The same person that here Jacob wrestles with is he whom Jacob remembereth in his benediction as his deliverer from all evil,* Gen. xlviii. 16. It was that God that appeared to him at Bethel when he fled from the face of his brother, Gen. xxxv. 7. *Ergo,*—

[4.] *Fourthly, Jacob is reproved for his curious inquiring or asking after the angel's name,* ver. 29, which is a clear argument or demonstration of his majesty and glory, God being above all notion and name. God is a super-substantial substance, an understanding not to be understood, a word never to be spoken. One being asked what God was, answered, 'That he must be God himself, before he could know God fully.'[1] We are as well able to comprehend the sea in a cockle-shell, as we are able to comprehend the Almighty, or that *nomen Majestativum,* as Tertullian phraseth it. 'In searching after God,' saith Chrysostom, 'I am like a man digging in a deep spring: I stand here, and the water riseth upon me; and I stand there, and still the water riseth upon me.'

In this conflict you have not one man wrestling with another, nor one man wrestling with a created angel, but a poor, weak, mortal man wrestling with an immortal God; weakness wrestling with strength, and a finite being with an infinite being. Though Jacob had no second, though he was all alone, though he was wonderfully overmatched, yet he wrestles and keeps his hold, and all in the strength of him he wrestles with.

(2.) *Secondly,* You have *the place where they combated,* and that was beside the ford Jabbok, ver. 22. This is the name of a brook or

[1] Dionys. Areop. de Divin. Nom., cap. i.

river springing by Rabba, the metropolis of the Ammonites, and issuing into Jordan beneath the Sea of Galilee, Num. xxi. 24; Deut. ii. 37; Judges xi. 13, 15; Deut. iii. 16. Jacob did never enjoy so much of the presence of God as when he had left the company of men. Oh! the sweet communion that Jacob had with God when he was retired from his family, and was all alone with his God by the ford Jabbok! Certainly Jacob was never less alone than at this time, when he was so alone. Saints often meet with the best wine and with the strongest cordials when they are all alone with God.

(3.) *Thirdly*, You have *the time of the combat*, and that was the night. At what time of the night this wrestling, this duel began, we nowhere read; but it lasted till break of day, it lasted till Jacob had the better of the angel. How many hours of the night this conflict lasted, no mortal man can tell. God's design was that none should be spectators nor witnesses of this combat but Jacob only; and therefore Jacob must be wrestling when others were sleeping.

(4.) *Fourthly*, You have *the ground of the quarrel*, and that was Jacob's fear of Esau, and his importunate desire for a blessing. Jacob flies to God, that he might not fall before man; he flies to God, that he might not fly before men. In a storm, there is no shelter like to the wing of God. He is safest, and happiest, and wisest, that lays himself under divine protection. This Jacob knew, and therefore he runs to God, as to his only city of refuge. In this conflict God would have given out: 'Let me go, for the day breaketh,' ver. 26; but Jacob keeps his hold, and tells him boldly to his very face that he would not let him go unless he would bless him. Oh the power of private prayer! It hath a kind of omnipotency in it; it takes God captive; it holds him as a prisoner; it binds the hands of the Almighty; yea, it will wring a mercy, a blessing, out of the hand of heaven itself. Oh the power of that prayer that makes a man victorious over the greatest, the highest power! Jacob, though a man, a single man, a travelling man, a tired man, yea, though a worm, that is easily crushed and trodden under foot, and no man, Isa. xli. 14, yet in private prayer he is so potent, that he overcomes the omnipotent God; he is so mighty, that he overcomes the Almighty.

(5.) *Fifthly*, You have *the nature or manner of the combat*, and that was both outward and inward, both corporal and spiritual. It was by might and flight; it was as well by the strength of his body as it was by the force of his faith. He wrestled not only with spiritual strugglings, tears, and prayers, Hosea xii. 4, but with corporal also, wherein God assailed him with one hand, and upheld him with the other. In this conflict, Jacob and the angel of the covenant did really lay arm on arm, and set shoulder to shoulder, and put foot to foot, and used all other sleights and ways as men do that wrestle one with another. The Hebrew word יאבק, from אבק, that is here rendered *wrestled*, signifies the raising of the dust; because those which did wrestle of old did not only wrestle naked, as the manner then was, but did also use to cast dust one upon another, that so they might take more sure hold one of another. Some, from this word *abak*, do conclude that Jacob and the angel did tug, and strive, and turn each other, till they sweat again; for so much the word imports. Jacob and the angel did not

wrestle in jest, but in good earnest; they wrestled with their might, as it were, for the garland; they strove for victory as for life.

But as this wrestling was corporal, so it was spiritual also. Jacob's soul takes hold of God, and Jacob's faith takes hold of God, and Jacob's prayers takes hold of God, and Jacob's tears takes hold of God, Hosea xii. 4, 5. Certainly Jacob's weapons in this warfare were mainly spiritual, and so 'mighty through God.' There is no overcoming of God but in his own strength. Jacob did more by his royal faith than he did by his noble hands, and more by weeping than he did by sweating, and more by praying than he did by all his bodily strivings.

(6.) Sixthly and lastly, You have *the issue of the combat*, and that is, victory over the angel, ver. 28. Jacob wrestles in the angel's arms and armour, and so overcomes him. As a prince, he overpowers the angel by that very power he had from the angel. The angel was as freely and fully willing to be conquered by Jacob, as Jacob was willing to be conqueror. When lovers wrestle, the strongest is willing enough to take a fall of the weakest; and so it was here. The father, in wrestling with his child, is willing enough, for his child's comfort and encouragement, to take a fall now and then; and so it was between the angel and Jacob in the present case. Now in this blessed story, as in a crystal glass, you may see the great power and prevalency of private prayer; it conquers the great conqueror; it is so omnipotent that it overcomes an omnipotent God.

Now this you may see more fully and sweetly cleared up in Hosea xii. 3, 4, 'He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed; he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us.' When Jacob was all alone and in a dark night, and but on one leg, yet then he played the prince with God, as the Hebrew hath it. Jacob by prayers and tears did so prince it with God as that he carried the blessing. Jacob's wrestling was by weeping, and his prevailing by praying. Prayers and tears are not only very pleasing to God, but also very prevalent with God. And thus you see that this great instance of Jacob speaks out aloud the prevalency of private prayer.

See another instance of this in David: Ps. lxvi. 8, 9, 'I am weary with my groanings: all the night make I my bed to swim: I water my couch with my tears.' These are all excessive figurative speeches, to set forth the greatness of his sorrow, and the multitude of his tears. David in his retirement makes the place of his sin, viz. his bed, to be the place of his repentance. David sins privately upon his bed, and David mourns privately upon his bed. Every place which we have polluted by sin, we should sanctify and water with our tears: ver. 8, 'Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.' As blood hath a voice, and as the rod hath a voice, so tears have a voice. Tears have tongues, and tears can speak. There is no noise to that that tears in secret make in the ears of God. A prudent and indulgent father can better pick out the wants and necessities of his children by their secret tears than by their loud complaints, by their weeping than by their words; and do you think that God can't do as much? Tears are not always mutes: Lam. ii. 18, 'Cry

aloud,' saith one, 'not with thy tongue, but with thy eyes; not with thy words, but with thy tears; for that is the prayer that maketh the most forcible entry into the ears of the great God of heaven.' Penitent tears are undeniable ambassadors that never return from the throne of grace without a gracious answer. Tears are a kind of silent prayers, which, though they say nothing, yet they obtain pardon; and though they plead not a man's cause, yet they obtain mercy at the hands of God. As you see in that great instance of Peter, who, though he said nothing that we read of, yet weeping bitterly, he obtained mercy, Mat. xxvi. 75. I have read of Augustine, who, coming as a visitant to the house of a sick man, he saw the room full of friends and kindred, who were all silent, yet all weeping: the wife sobbing, the children sighing, the kinsfolk lamenting, all mourning; whereupon Augustine uttered this short ejaculatory prayer, 'Lord, what prayer dost thou hear, if not these?' Ver. 9, 'The Lord hath heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer.' God sometimes answers his people before they pray: Isa. lxv. 24, 'And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer.' And sometimes while they are praying; so it follows in the same verse, 'And while they are yet speaking I will hear.' So Isa. xxx. 19, 'He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry: when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.' And sometimes after they have prayed, as the experiences of all Christians can testify. Sometimes God neither hears nor receives a prayer; and this is the common case and lot of the wicked, Prov. i. 28, Job xxvii. 9, Isa. i. 15. Sometimes God hears the prayers of his people, but doth not presently answer them, as in that case of Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 7–9; and sometimes God both hears and receives the prayers of his people, as here he did David's. Now in this instance of David, as in a glass, you may run and read the prevalency of private prayer and of secret tears.

You may take another instance of this in Jonah: chap. ii. 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 'Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly, and said, I cried by reason of my affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. For thou hadst cast me into the deep, into the midst of the seas, and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer came in unto thee, into thy holy temple. And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.' When Jonah was all alone, and in the midst of many dangers and deaths, when he was in the whale's belly, yea, in the belly of hell,—so called because horrid and hideous, deep and dismal,—yet then private prayer fetches him from thence. Let a man's dangers be never so many, nor never so great, yet secret prayer hath a certain omnipotency in it that will deliver him out of them all. In multiplied afflictions, private prayer is most prevalent with God. In the very midst of drowning, secret prayer will keep both head and heart above water. Upon Jonah's private prayer, God sends forth his *mandamus*, and the fish serves Jonah for a ship to sail safe to shore. When the case is even desperate, yet then private prayer can do much with God. Private prayer is of that power that it can open

the doors of leviathan, as you see in this great instance, which yet is reckoned as a thing not feasible, Job xli. 14.

Another instance of the prevalency of private prayer you have in that 2 Kings iv. 32–35, 'And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord.' Privacy is a good help to fervency in prayer. 'And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and he stretched himself upon the child, and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.' Oh the power, the prevalency, the omnipotency of private prayer, that raises the dead to life! And the same effect had the private prayer of Elijah in raising the widow's son of Zarephath to life, 1 Kings xvii. 18, *et seq.* The great prevalency of Moses his private prayers you may read in the following scriptures: Num. xii. 1, 2, 'And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord: and the Lord heard it: and his anger was kindled: and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp. And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the Lord, the fire was quenched.' Moses by private prayer rules and overrules with God; he was so potent with God in private prayer that he could have what he would of God. So Num. xxi. 7–9; Ps. cvi. 23; Exod. xxxii. 9–14; Exod. xiv. 15–17. The same you may see in Nehemiah, chap. i. 11, compared with chap. ii. 4–8. So Luther, perceiving the cause of God and the work of reformation to be greatly strained and in danger, he went into his closet, and never left wrestling with God till he had received a gracious answer from heaven; upon which he comes out of his closet to his friends leaping and triumphing with *Vicimus, vicimus,* we have overcome, we have overcome, in his mouth. At which time it is observed that there came out a proclamation from Charles the Fifth, that none should be further molested for the profession of the gospel. At another time, Luther being in private prayer for a sick friend of his, who was very comfortable and useful to him, had a particular answer for his recovery; whereupon he was so confident, that he sent word to his friend that he should certainly recover; and so it fell out accordingly. And so Latimer prayed with great zeal for three things:

(1.) That Queen Elizabeth might come to the crown;

(2.) That he might seal the truth with his heart blood; and

(3.) That the gospel might be restored once again, once again, which he expressed with great vehemency of spirit: all which three God heard him in.[1]

Constantine commanded that his effigies should be engraven, not as other emperors in their armour leaning, but as in a posture of prayer, kneeling, to manifest to the world that he won more by secret prayer than by open battles.

Mr Dod reports, that when many good people had often sought the Lord in the behalf of a woman that was possessed with the devil, and

[1] Foxe; and cf. Sibbes *sub nomine.*—G.

yet could not prevail, at last they appointed a day for fasting and prayer; at which time there came a poor woman to the chamber door where the exercise was begun and craved entrance, but she being poor they would not admit her in; upon that the poor woman kneeled down behind the door and sought God by prayer. But she had not prayed long before the evil spirit raged, roared, and cried out in the possessed woman, 'Take away the old woman behind the door, for I must be gone; take away the old woman behind the door, for I must be gone.' And so by the old woman's prayers behind the door he was cast out. Oh the prevalency of prayer behind the door! And thus you see by all these great instances the great prevalency of private prayer.

Private prayer, like Saul's sword and Jonathan's bow, when duly qualified as to the person and act, never returns empty; it hits the mark, it carries the day with God; it pierceth the walls of heaven, though, like those of Gaza, made of brass and iron, Isa. xlv. 2. Oh, who can express the powerful oratory of private prayer! &c.

[9.] *Ninthly*, Consider, *that secret duties are the most soul-enriching duties.* Look, as secret meals make fat bodies, so secret duties make fat souls; and as secret trades brings in great earthly riches, so secret prayers makes many rich in spiritual blessings and in heavenly riches. Private prayer is that privy key of heaven that unlocks all the treasures of glory to the soul. The best riches and the sweetest mercies God usually gives to his people when they are in their closets upon their knees. Look, as the warmth the chickens find by close sitting under the hen's wings cherisheth them, so are the graces of the saints enlivened, and cherished, and strengthened by the sweet secret influences which their souls fall under when they are in their closet-communion with God. Private prayer conscientiously performed is the privy key of heaven, that hath unlocked such treasures and such secrets as hath passed the skill of the cunningest devil to find out. Private prayer midwifes the choicest mercies and the chiefest riches in upon us. Certainly there are none so rich in gracious experiences as those that are most exercised in closet duties: Ps. xxxiv. 6, 'This poor man cried,' saith David, 'and the Lord saved him out of all his troubles.' David, pointing to himself, tells us that he 'cried,' that is, silently and secretly, as Moses did at the Red Sea, and as Nehemiah did in the presence of the king of Persia; 'and the Lord saved him out of all his troubles,' Exod. xiv. 15; Neh. i. 11, and ii. 4. And, oh, what additions were these deliverances to his experiences! O my friends, look, as the tender dew that falls in the silent night makes the grass and herbs and flowers to flourish and grow more abundantly than great showers of rain that fall in the day, so secret prayer will more abundantly cause the sweet herbs of grace and holiness to grow and flourish in the soul, than all those more open, public, and visible duties of religion, which too, too often are mingled and mixed with the sun and wind of pride and hypocrisy.

Beloved! you know that many times a favourite at court gets more by one secret motion, by one private request to his prince, than a tradesman or a merchant gets in twenty years' labour and pains, &c. So a Christian many times gets more by one secret motion, by one private request to the King of kings, than many others do by trading

long in the more public duties of religion. O sirs! remember that in private prayer we have a far greater advantage as to the exercise of our own gifts and graces and parts, than we have in public; for in public we only hear others exercise their parts and gifts, &c.; in public duties we are more passive, but in private duties we are more active. Now, the more our gifts and parts and graces are exercised, the more they are strengthened and increased. All acts strengthen habits. The more sin is acted, the more it is strengthened. And so it is with our gifts and graces; the more they are acted, the more they are strengthened. But,

[10.] *Tenthly, Take many things together.* All Christians have their secret sins. Ps. xix. 12, 'Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.' Secret not only to other men, but himself; even such secret sins as grew from errors which he understood not. It is incident to every man to err, and then to be ignorant of his errors. Many sins I see in myself, saith he, and more there are which I cannot espy, which I cannot find out; nay, I think, saith he, that every man's sins do arise beyond his accounts. There is not the best, the wisest, nor the holiest man in the world, that can give a full and entire list of his sins. 'Who can understand his errors?' This interrogation hath the force of an affirmation: 'Who can?' No man! no, not the most perfect and innocent man in the world. O friends! who can reckon up the secret sinful imaginations, the secret sinful inclinations, or the secret pride, the secret blasphemies, the secret hypocrisies, the secret atheistical risings, the secret murmurings, the secret repinings, the secret discontents, the secret insolencies, the secret filthinesses, the secret unbelievings, &c., that God might every day charge upon his soul? Should the best and holiest man on earth have but his secret sins every day written in his forehead, it would not only put him to a crimson blush, but it would make him pull his hat over his eyes, or cover his face with a double scarf. So 1 Kings viii. 38, 'What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart,' &c. Sin is the greatest plague in the world, but never more dangerous than when it reaches the heart. Now, secret sins commonly lie nearest the heart, the fountain from whence they take a quick, immediate, and continual supply. Secret sins are as near to original sin as the first droppings are to the spring head. And as every secret sin lies nearest the heart, so every secret sin is the plague of the heart. Now, as secret diseases are not to be laid open to every one, but only to the prudent physician, so our secret sins, which are the secret plagues, the secret diseases of our souls, are not to be laid open to every one, but only to the physician of souls, that is only able both to cure them and pardon them. And as all Christians have their secret sins, so all Christians have their secret temptations, 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. And as they have their secret temptations, so they have their secret wants; yea, many times they have such particular and personal wants that there is not one in the congregation, nor one in the family, that hath the like. And as they have their secret wants, so they have their secret fears, and secret snares, and secret straits, and secret troubles, and secret doubts, and secret jealousies, &c. And how do all these things call aloud upon every Christian to be frequent and constant in secret prayer!

[11.] *Eleventhly*, Consider, *Christ is very much affected and delighted in the secret prayers of his people.* Cant. ii. 14, 'O my dove that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.' Christ observes his spouse when she is in the clefts of the rock; when she is gotten into a corner a-praying, he looks upon her with singular delight, and with special intimations of his love. Nothing is more sweet, delightful, and welcome to Christ than the secret services of his people. Their secret breathings are like lovely songs to him, Mal. iii. 4; their secret prayers in the clefts of the rock, or under the stairs, are as sweet incense to Jesus. The spouse retires to the secret places of the stairs not only for security, but also for secresy, that so she might the more freely, without suspicion of hypocrisy, pour out her soul into the bosom of her beloved. The great delight that parents take in the secret lispings and whisperings of their children, is no delight to that which Christ takes in the secret prayers of his people. And therefore, as you would be friends and furtherers of Christ's delight, be much in secret prayer.

[12.] *Twelfthly*, Consider *you are the only persons in all the world that God hath made choice of to reveal his secrets to.* John xv. 15, 'Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.' Everything that God the Father had communicated to Christ as mediator to be revealed to his servants, he did make known to his disciples as to his bosom-friends. Christ loves his people as friends, and he uses them as friends, and he opens his heart to them as friends. There is nothing in the heart of Christ that concerns the internal and eternal welfare of his friends, but he reveals it to them: he reveals himself, his love, his eternal good will, the mysteries of faith, and the secrets of his covenant, to his friends.[1] Christ loves not to entertain his friends with things that are commonly and vulgarly known. Christ will reveal the secrets of his mind, the secrets of his love, the secrets of his thoughts, the secrets of his heart, and the secrets of his purposes, to all his bosom-friends. Samson could not hide his mind, his secrets, from Delilah, though it cost him his life, Judges xvi. 15–17; and do you think that Christ can hide his mind, his secrets, from them for whom he hath laid down his life? Surely no. O sirs! Christ is,

(1.) A universal friend.

(2.) An omnipotent friend, an almighty friend. He is no less than thirty times called Almighty in that book of Job; he can do above all expressions and beyond all apprehensions.

(3.) He is an omniscient friend.

(4.) He is an omnipresent friend.

(5.) He is an indeficient friend.

(6.) He is an independent friend.

(7.) He is an unchangeable friend.

(8.) He is a watchful friend.

(9.) He is a tender and compassionate friend.

(10.) He is a close and faithful friend; and therefore he cannot but

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11; John i. 9; Rom. xvi. 25; 1 Cor. ii. 7; Eph. iii. 3, 4, 9.

open and unbosom himself to all his bosom friends. To be reserved and close is against the very law of friendship. Faithful friends are very free in imparting their thoughts, their minds, their secrets, one to another. A real friend accounts nothing worth knowing unless he makes it known to his friends. He rips up his greatest and most inward secrets to his friends. Job calls his friends 'inward friends,' or the men of his secrets, Job xix. 19. All Christ's friends are inward friends; they are the men of his secrets: Prov. iii. 32, 'His secrets are with the righteous,' that is, his covenant and fatherly affection, which is hid and secret from the world. He that is righteous in secret, where no man sees him, he is the righteous man, to whom God will communicate his closest secrets, as to his dearest bosom-friend. It is only a bosom-friend to whom we will unbosom ourselves. So Ps. xxv. 14, 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.'

Now, there are three sorts of divine secrets:

(1.) *First, There are secrets of providence,* and these he reveals to the righteous, and to them that fear him, Ps. cvii. 43, Hosea xiv. 9. The prophet Amos speaks of these secrets of providence: Amos iii. 7, 'Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secrets unto his servants and prophets.' Micah knew the secret of the Lord touching Ahab, which neither Zedekiah nor any other of the false prophets knew. So Gen. xviii. 17, 'And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?' The destruction of Sodom was a secret that lay in the bosom of God; but Abraham being a bosom-friend, God communicates this secret to him, ver. 19–21. Abraham was a friend, a faithful friend, a friend by a specialty, James ii. 23; and therefore God makes him both of his court and counsel. Oh how greatly doth God condescend to his people. He speaks to them as a man would speak to his friend; and there is no secrets of providence, which may be for their advantage, but he will reveal them to his faithful servants. As all faithful friends have the same friends and the same enemies, so they are mutual in the communication of their secrets one to another; and so it was between God and Abraham.

(2.) *Secondly, There are the secrets of his kingdom;* and these he reveals to his people: Mat. xiii. 11, 'Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but unto them it is not given.' So Mat. xi. 25, 'At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.' 'Let us not think,' saith Jerome,[1] 'that the gospel is in the words of Scripture, but in the sense; not in the outside, but in the marrow; not in the leaves of words, but in the root of reason.' Augustine humbly begged of God, that if it were his pleasure, he would send Moses to him to interpret some more abstruse and intricate passages in his book of Genesis.[2] There are many choice, secret, hidden, and mysterious truths and doctrines in the gospel, which Christ reveals to his people, that this poor, blind, ignorant world are strangers to.[3] There are many secrets wrapped up in the plainest truths and doctrines of the gospel,

[1] Jerome ad Eph. lib. i. [2] Augustine on Genesis.—G.
[3] Joel ii. 28; 1 Tim. iii. 9, 16; Col. i. 26, 27; 1 Cor. ii. 9–12: Eph. iv. 21.

which none can effectually open and reveal but the Spirit of the Lord, that searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. There are many secrets and mysteries in the gospel, that all the learning and labour in the world can never give a man insight into. There are many that know the doctrine of the gospel, the history of the gospel, that are mere strangers to the secrets of the gospel. There is a secret power, a secret authority, a secret efficacy, a secret prevalency, a secret goodness, a secret sweetness in the gospel, that none experience but those to whom the Lord is pleased to impart gospel secrets to: Isa. xxix. 11, 12, 'Seal my law among my disciples.' The law of God to wicked men is a sealed book that they cannot understand, Dan. xii. 9, 10. It is as blotted paper that they cannot read. Look, as a private letter to a friend contains secret matter that no man else may read because it is sealed; so the law of grace is sealed up under the privy-seal of heaven, so that no man can open it or read it, but Christ's faithful friends to whom it is sent. The whole Scripture, saith Gregory, is but one entire letter despatched from the Lord Christ to his beloved spouse on earth. The Rabbins say that there are four keys that God hath under his girdle: 1, the key of the clouds; 2, the key of the womb; 3, the key of the grave; 4, the key of food; and I may add a fifth key that is under his girdle, and that is the key of the word, the key of the Scripture; which key none can turn but he that 'hath the key of David, that opens, and no man shuts; and that shuts, and no man opens,' Rev. iii. 7. O sirs! God reveals himself, and his mind, and will, and truth, to his people, in a more friendly and familiar way than he doth to others: Mark iv. 11, 'And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:' Luke viii. 10, 'And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.' Though great doctors, and profound clerks, and deep-studied but unsanctified divines may know much of the doctrines of the gospel, and commend much the doctrines of the gospel, and dispute much for the doctrines of the gospel, and glory much in the doctrines of the gospel, and take a great deal of pains to dress and trim up the doctrines of the gospel, with the flowers of rhetoric or eloquence; though it be much better to present truth in her native plainness, than to hang her ears with counterfeit pearls. . . . The word, without human adornments, is like the stone *garamantides*, that hath drops of gold in itself, sufficient to enrich the believing soul. . . . Yet the special, spiritual, powerful, and saving knowledge of the doctrines of the gospel, is a secret, a mystery, yea, a hidden mystery to them, Rom. xvi. 25, 1 Cor. ii. 7.

Chrysostom compares the mysteries of Christ, in regard of the wicked, to a written book, that the ignorant can neither read nor spell; he sees the cover, the leaves, and the letters, but he understands not the meaning of what he sees. He compares the mystery of grace to an indited epistle, which an unskilful idiot[1] viewing, he cannot read it, he cannot understand it; he knoweth it is paper and ink, but the sense, the matter, he knows not, he understands not. So unsanctified persons, though they are never so learned, and though they may perceive

[1] Cf. Sibbes, vol. i. pages 186, 290.—G.

the bark of the mystery of Christ, yet they perceive not, they understand not, the mystery of grace, the inward sense of the Spirit, in the blessed Scriptures. Though the devil be the greatest scholar in the world, and though he have more learning than all the men in the world have, yet there are many thousand secrets and mysteries in the gospel of grace, that he knows not really, spiritually, feelingly, efficaciously, powerfully, thoroughly, savingly, &c.

Oh, but now Christ makes known himself, his mind, his grace, his truth, to his people, in a more clear, full, familiar, and friendly way: 2 Sam. vii. 27, 'For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant;' so you read it in your books; but in the Hebrew it is thus: 'Lord, thou hast revealed this to the ear of thy servant.' Now, the emphasis lieth in that word, *to the ear*, which is left out in your books. When God makes known himself to his people, he revealeth things to their ears, as we use to do to a friend who is intimate with us: we speak a thing to his ear. There is many a secret which Jesus Christ speaks in the ears of his servants, which others never come to be acquainted with: 2 Cor. iv. 6, 'God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'

The six several gradations that are in this scripture are worthy of our most serious consideration. Here is,

First, Knowledge; and,

Secondly, The knowledge of the glory of God; and,

Thirdly, The light of the knowledge of the glory of God; and,

Fourthly, Shining; and,

Fifthly, Shining into our hearts; and,

Sixthly, Shining into our hearts in the face of Jesus Christ.

And thus you see that the Lord reveals the secrets of himself, his kingdom, his truth, his grace, his glory, to the saints. But,

(3.) *Thirdly, There are the secrets of his favour, the secrets of his special love, that he bears to them; the secret purposes of his heart to save them;* and these are those great secrets, those 'deep things of God.' which none can reveal 'but the Spirit of God.' Now these great secrets, these deep things of God, God doth reveal to his people by his Spirit: 1 Cor. ii. 10–12, 'But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.' Now what are the things that are freely given to us of God, but our election, vocation, justification, sanctification, and glorification? And why hath God given us his Spirit, but that we should know 'the things that are freely given to us of God.' Some by *secret* in that 25th Psalm, do understand a particular assurance of God's favours, whereby happiness is secured to us, both for the present and for the future. They understand by secret, the sealing of the Spirit, the hidden manna, the white stone, and the new name in it, 'which none knoweth but he that hath it.' And so much those words, 'He will shew them his covenant,' seems to import: for what greater secret

can God impart to his people, than that of opening the covenant of grace to them in its freeness, fulness, sureness, sweetness, suitableness, everlastingness, and in sealing up his good pleasure, and all the spiritual and eternal blessings of the covenant to them? Such as love and serve the Lord shall be of his cabinet-council, they shall know his soul-secrets, and be admitted into a very gracious familiarity and friendship with himself: John xiv. 21–23, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself unto him. Judas saith unto him (not Iscariot), Lord! how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If any man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' God and Christ will keep house with them, and manifest the secrets of their love to them that are observant of their commands. And thus you see that the saints are the only persons to whom God will reveal the secrets of his providence, the secrets of his kingdom, and the secrets of his love unto. Christ came out of the bosom of his Father, and he opens all the secrets of his Father only to his bosom-friends. Now what an exceeding high honour is it for God to open the secrets of his love, the secrets of his promises, the secrets of his providences, the secrets of his counsels, and the secrets of his covenant, to his people!

Tiberius Cæsar thought no man fit to know his secrets. And among the Persians none but noblemen, lords, and dukes, might be made partakers of state secrets; they esteeming secresy a godhead, a divine thing, as Ammianus Marcellinus affirms. But now such honour God hath put upon all his saints, as to make them lords and nobles, and the only privy statesmen in the court of heaven. The highest honour and glory that earthly princes can put upon their subjects is to communicate to them their greatest secrets. Now this high honour and glory the King of kings hath put upon his people; 'For his secrets are with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant.' It was a high honour to Elisha, 2 Kings, vi. 12, that he could tell the secrets that were spoken in the king's bed-chamber. Oh! what an honour must it then be for the saints to know the secrets that are spoken in the presence-chamber of the King of kings!

Now I appeal to the very consciences of all that fear the Lord, whether it be not a just, equal, righteous, and necessary thing, that the people of God should freely and fully lay open all the secrets of their hearts before the Lord, who hath thus highly honoured them, as to reveal the secrets of his providence, kingdom, and favour to them? Yea, I appeal to all serious and ingenuous Christians, whether it be not against the light and law of nature, and against the law of love, and law of friendship, to be reserved and close, yea, to hide our secrets from him who reveals his greatest and our choicest secrets to us? And if it be, why then do not you in secret lay open all your secret sins, and secret wants, and secret desires, secret fears, &c., to him that seeth in secret? You know all secrets are to be communicated only in secret. None but fools in folio will communicate secrets upon a stage, or before many. But,

[13.] *Thirteenthly*, Consider, *that in times of great straits and trials, in times of great afflictions and persecutions, private prayer is the Christian's meat and drink;* it is his chief city of refuge; it is his shelter and hiding-place in a stormy day. When the saints have been driven by violent persecutions into holes, and caves, and dens, and deserts, and howling wildernesses, private prayer hath been their meat and drink, and under Christ their only refuge.[1] When Esau came forth with hostile intentions against Jacob, secret prayer was Jacob's refuge: Gen. xxxii. 6–9, 11, 'And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him:' all cut-throats. 'Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands; and said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.' When all is at stake, it is Christian prudence to save what we can, though we cannot save what we would. 'And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee.' Promises in private must be prayed over. God loves to be sued upon his own bond, when he and his people are alone. 'Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children;' or upon the children, meaning he will put all to death. Some look upon the words to be a metaphor taken from fowlers, who kill and take away the young and the dams together, contrary to that old law, Deut. xxii. 6. Others say it is a phrase that doth most lively represent the tenderness of a mother, who, seeing her children in distress, spares not her own body nor life, to hazard the same for her children's preservation, by interposing herself, even to be massacred together with and upon them, Hosea x. 14. When Jacob, and all that was near and dear unto him, were in eminent danger of being cut off by Esau, and those men of blood that were with him, he betakes himself to private prayer as his only city of refuge against the rage and malice of the mighty. And so when Jeremiah was in a solitary and loathsome dungeon, private prayer was his meat and drink, it was his only city of refuge: Jer. xxxiii. 1–3, 'Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah the second time, while he was yet shut up in the court of the prison, saying, Thus saith the Lord, the maker thereof, the Lord that formed it, to establish it; The Lord is his name: call unto me, and I will answer thee, and I will shew thee great and mighty,' or hidden 'things, which thou knowest not.' When Jeremiah was in a lonesome, loathsome prison, God encourages him by private prayer, to seek for further discoveries and revelations of those choice and singular favours, which in future times he purposed to confer upon his people: so 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11–13, 'Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters,' or chains, 'and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him: and he was entreated of him,

[1] Heb. xi. 37, 38; Rev. xii. 6; Ps. cii. 6–14.

and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God.' When Manasseh was in fetters in his enemy's country, when he was stripped of all his princely glory, and led captive into Babylon, he betakes himself to private prayer as his only city of refuge; and by this means he prevails with God for his restoration to his crown and kingdom. Private prayer is a city of refuge that no power nor policy, no craft nor cruelty, no violence nor force, is ever able to surprise. Though the joint prayers of the people of God together were often obstructed and hindered in the times of the ten persecutions, yet they were never able to obstruct or hinder secret prayer, private prayer. When men and devils have done their worst, every Christian will be able to maintain his private trade with heaven. Private prayer will shelter a Christian against all the national, domestical, and personal storms and tempests that may threaten him. When a man is lying upon a sick-bed alone, or when a man is in prison alone, or when a man is with Job left upon the dunghill alone, or when a man is with John banished for the testimony of Jesus into this or that island alone, oh then private prayer will be his meat and drink, his shelter, his hiding-place, his heaven. When all other trades fail, this trade of private prayer will hold good. But,

[14.] *Fourteenthly*, Consider *that God is omnipresent*.[1] We cannot get into any blind hole, or dark corner, or secret place, but the Lord hath an eye there, the Lord will keep us company there: Mat. vi. 6, 'And thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.' So ver. 18. There is not the darkest, dirtiest hole in the world into which a saint creeps, but God hath a favourable eye there. God never wants an eye to see our secret tears, nor an ear to hear our secret cries and groans, nor a heart to grant our secret requests, and therefore we ought to pour out our souls to him in secret: Ps. xxxviii. 9, 'Lord! all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.' Though our private desires are never so confused, though our private requests are never so broken, and though our private groanings are never so much hidden from men, yet God eyes them all, God records them all, and God puts them all upon the file[2] of heaven, and will one day crown them with glorious answers and returns. We cannot sigh out a prayer in secret, but he sees us; we cannot lift up our eyes to him at midnight, but he observes us. The eye that God hath upon his people when they are in secret, is such a special tender eye of love, as opens his ear, his heart, and his hand, for their good: 1 Peter iii. 12, 'For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers;' or, as the Greek hath it, 'his ears are unto their prayers.' If their prayers are so faint, that they cannot reach up as high as heaven, then God will bow the heavens and come down to their prayers.[3] God's eye is upon every secret sigh, and every secret groan, and every secret tear, and every secret desire, and every secret pant of love, and every secret breathing of soul, and every secret melting and working of heart; all which should encourage us to be much in secret duties, in closet services. As a Christian is never out of the reach of God's hand, so he is never out of the view of God's eye. If a Christian cannot hide

[1] Jer. xvi. 17; Job xxxiv. 21; Prov. v. 21; Jer. xxxii. 19; Rev. ii. 23; Lam. iii. 56.
[2] Cf. Sibbes, vol. i. pages 158, 289.—G.
[3] God is *totus oculus*, all eye.

himself from the sun, which is God's minister of light, how impossible will it be to hide himself from him whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun? In every private duty, a Christian is still under the eye of God's omnisciency. When we are in the darkest hole, God hath windows into our breasts, and observes all the secret actings of our inward man, 1 Tim. ii. 8. The eye of God is not confined to this place or that, to this company or that; God hath an eye upon his people as well when they are alone, as when they are among a multitude; as well when they are in a corner, as when they are in a crowd. Diana's temple was burnt down when she was busy at Alexander's birth, and could not be at two places together.[1] But God is present both in paradise and in the wilderness, both in the family aud in the closet, both in public and in private at the same time. God is an omnipresent God; he is everywhere. *Non est ubi, ubi non est Deus.* As he is included in no place, so he is excluded from no place: Jer. xxiii. 24, 'Can any man hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him, saith the Lord?' Prov. xv. 3, 'The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good,' or, 'contemplating the evil and the good,' as the Hebrew may be read. Now, to *contemplate*, is more than simply to *behold*; for contemplation addeth to a simple apprehension a deeper degree of knowledge, entering into the very inside of a matter; and so indeed doth God discern the very inward intentions of the heart, and the most secret motions of the spirit. God is an infinite and immense being, whose centre is everywhere, and whose circumference is nowhere. Now, if our God be omnipresent, then wheresoever we are, our God is present with us: if we are in prison alone with Joseph, our God is present with us there; or if we are in exile alone with David, our God is present with us there; or if we are alone in our closets, our God is present with us there. God seeth us in secret; and therefore let us seek his face in secret. Though heaven be God's palace, yet it is not his prison. But,

[15.] *Fifteenthly, He that willingly neglects private prayer shall certainly be neglected in his public prayer;* he that will not call upon God in secret shall find by sad experience that God will neither hear him nor regard him in public. Want of private duties is the great reason why the hearts of many are so dead and dull, so formal and carnal, so barren and unfruitful under public ordinances. Oh that Christians would seriously lay this to heart! Certainly, that man or woman's heart is best in public who is most frequent in private. They make most yearnings in public ordinances that are most conscientiously exercised in closet duties. No man's graces rises so high, nor no man's experiences rises so high, nor no man's communion with God rises so high, nor no man's divine enjoyments rises so high, nor no man's springs of comfort rises so high, nor no man's hopes rises so high, nor no man's parts and gifts rises so high, &c., as theirs do, who conscientiously wait upon God in their closets before they wait upon him in the assembly of his people; and who when they return from public ordinances retire into their closets and look up to heaven for a blessing upon the public means. It is certain that private duties fit the soul

[1] A remark assigned to Hegesias the Magnesian: by Cicero to Timæus of Tauromenium. Plutarch: *Alexander*, 3. Cicero, de Nat. Deor. ii. 27.—G.

for public ordinances. He that makes conscience to wait upon God in private, shall find by experience that God will wonderfully bless public ordinances to him, Micah ii. 7. My design is not to set up one ordinance of God above another, nor to cause one ordinance of God to clash with another,—the public with the private, or the private with the public,—but that every ordinance may have its proper place and right, the desires of my soul being to prize every ordinance, and to praise every ordinance, and to practise every ordinance, and to improve every ordinance, and to bless the Lord for every ordinance. But as ever you would see the beauty and glory of God in his sanctuary, as ever you would have public ordinances to be lovely and lively to your souls, as ever you would have your drooping spirits revived, and your languishing souls refreshed, and your weak graces strengthened, and your strong corruptions weakened under public ordinances, be more careful and conscientious in the performance of closet duties, Ps. lxiii. 1–3. Oh how strong in grace! Oh how victorious over sin! Oh how dead to the world! Oh how alive to Christ! Oh how fit to live! Oh how prepared to die! might many a Christian have been, had they been but more frequent, serious, and conscientious in the discharge of closet-duties. Not but that I think there is a truth in that saying of Bede—the word church being rightly understood—viz., That he that comes not willingly to church shall one day go unwillingly to hell. But,

[16.] *Sixteenthly*, Consider, *the times wherein we live call aloud for secret prayer*. Hell seems to be broke loose, and men turned into incarnate devils:[1] land-destroying and soul-damning wickednesses walk up and down the streets with a whore's forehead, without the least check or control: Jer. iii. 3, 'Thou hast a whore's forehead, thou refusest to be ashamed;' chap. vi. 15, 'Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush.' They had sinned away shame, instead of being ashamed of sin. Custom in sin had quite banished all sense of sin and all shame for sin, so that they would not suffer nature to draw her veil of blushing before their great abominations. They were like to Caligula, a wicked emperor, who used to say of himself, that he loved nothing better in himself than that he could not be ashamed. The same words are repeated in chap. viii. 12. How applicable these scriptures are to the present time I will leave the prudent reader to judge. But what doth the prophet do now they were as bold in sin and as shameless as so many harlots? That you may see in Jer. xiii. 17: 'But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places,' or secresies, 'for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore' (Hebrew, weeping weep, or shedding tears shed tears; the doubling of the verb notes the bitter and grievous lamentation that he should make for them), 'and run down with tears.' Now they were grown up to that height of sin and wickedness, that they were above all shame and blushing; now they were grown so proud, so hardened, so obstinate, so rebellious, so mad upon mischief, that no mercies could melt them or allure them, nor no threatenings nor judgments could any ways terrify them or stop them. The prophet goes into a corner, he retires himself into the most secret

[1] Curtius, an heathen, could say that he was an undone man that knoweth no shame.

places, and there he weeps bitterly, there he weeps as if he were resolved to drown himself in his own tears. When the springs of sorrow rise high, a Christian turns his back upon company, and retires himself into places of greatest privacy, that so he may the more freely and the more fully vent his sorrow and grief before the Lord. Ah, England, England! what pride, luxury, lasciviousness, licentiousness, wantonness, drunkenness, cruelties, injustice, oppressions, fornications, adulteries, falsehoods, hypocrisy, bribery, atheism, horrid blasphemies, and hellish impieties, are now to be found rampant in the midst of thee! Ah, England! England! how are the Lord's Sabbaths profaned, pure ordinances despised, Scriptures rejected, the Spirit resisted and derided, the righteous reviled, wickedness countenanced, and Christ many thousand times in a day by these cursed practices afresh crucified! Ah, England! England! were our forefathers alive, how sadly would they blush to see such a horrid degenerate posterity as is to be found in the midst of thee! How is our forefathers' hospitality converted into riot and luxury, their frugality into pride and prodigality, their simplicity into subtilty, their sincerity into hypocrisy, their charity into cruelty, their chastity into chambering and wantonness, their sobriety into drunkenness, their plain-dealing into dissembling, their works of compassion into works of oppression, and their love to the people of God into an utter enmity against the people of God! &c. And what is the voice of all these crying abominations, but every Christian to his closet, every Christian to his closet, and there weep, with weeping Jeremiah, bitterly, for all these great abominations whereby God is dishonoured openly. Oh weep in secret for their sins who openly glory in their sins, which should be their greatest shame. Oh blush in secret for them that are past all blushing for their sins; for who knows but that the whole land may fare the better for the sakes of a few that are mourners in secret? But however it goes with the nation, such as mourn in secret for the abominations of the times, may be confident that when sweeping judgments shall come upon the land, the Lord will hide them in the secret chambers of his providence, he will set a secret mark of deliverance upon their foreheads that mourn in secret for the crying sins of the present day, as he did upon theirs in Ezek. ix. 4–6.

[17.] *Seventeenthly,* Consider *that the near and dear relations that you stand in to the Lord calls aloud for secret prayer,* John xv. 14, 15. You are his friends. Now, a true friend loves to visit his friend when he may find him alone, and enjoy privacy with him. A true friend loves to pour out his heart into the bosom of his friend when he hath him in a corner, or in the field, or under a hedge. You are his favourites; and what favourite is there that hides his secret from his prince? Do not all favourites open their hearts to their princes when they are alone? You are his children; and what ingenuous child is there that doth not delight to be much with his father when he is alone, when nobody is by? Oh, how free and open are children when they have their parents alone, beyond what they are when company is present. You are the spouse of Christ; and what spouse, what wife is there that doth not love to be much with her husband when he is alone? True lovers are always best when they are most alone: Cant. vii. 10–12, 'I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me. Come, my beloved,

let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vines flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.' The spouse of Christ is very desirous to enjoy his company in the fields, that so, having her beloved alone, she might the more freely and the more secretly open her heart to him. As wives, when they are walking alone with their husbands in the fields, are more free to open their minds and the secrets of their hearts, than they are when in their houses with their children and servants about them, so it was with the spouse. Without all peradventure, they have very great cause to question whether they are Christ's real friends, favourites, children, spouse, who seldom or never converse with Christ in their closets, who are shy of Christ when they are alone, who never accustom themselves to give Christ secret visits. What Delilah said to Samson, Judges xvi. 15, 'How canst thou say, I love thee, when thou hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth' (the discovery of which secret at last cost him his life), that, Christ may say to very many in our days: How can you say you love me, when you never acquaint me with your secrets? How can you say you love me, when you never bestow any private visits upon me? How can you say that you are my friends, my faithful friends, my bosom-friends, when you never in private unbosom yourselves to me? How can you say that you are my favourites, when you can spend one month after another, and one quarter of a year after another, and yet not let me know one of all your secrets, when every day you might have my ear in secret if you pleased? How can you say that you are my children, and yet be so close and reserved as you are? How can you say you are my spouse, and that you lie in my bosom, and yet never take any delight to open your hearts, your secrets, to me when I am alone? What Alexander said to one that was of his name, but a coward, 'Either lay down the name of Alexander, or fight like Alexander,'[1] that I say to you, Either be frequent in closet duties, as becomes a Christian, or else lay down the name of a Christian; either unbosom yourselves in secret to Christ, as friends, favourites, children, spouses, or else lay down these names, &c. But,

[18.] *Eighteenthly*, Consider *that God hath set a special mark of favour, honour, and observation, upon those that have prayed in secret.* As you may see in Moses, Exod. xxxiv. 28; and in Abraham, Gen. xxi. 33; and in Isaac, Gen. xxiv. 63; and in Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 24–29; and in David, Ps. lv. 16, 17; and in Daniel, chap. vi. 10; and in Paul, Acts ix. 11; and in Cornelius, Acts x. 2, 4; and in Peter, Acts x. 9–12; and in Manasseh, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 18, 19. God hath put all these worthies that have exercised themselves in secret prayer upon record, to their everlasting fame and honour. The Persians seldom write their king's name but in characters of gold. God hath writ, as I may say, their names in characters of gold who have made conscience of exercising themselves in secret prayer. The precious names of those that have addicted themselves to closet-duties are as statues of gold, which the polluted breath of men can no ways stain; they are like so many shining suns that no clouds can darken; they are like so many sparkling diamonds that shine brightest in the darkest night. A Chris-

[1] Plutarch, *Alexander*.—G.

tian can never get into a hole, a corner, a closet, to pour out his soul before the Lord, but the Lord makes an honourable observation of him, and sets a secret mark of favour upon him, Ezek. ix. 4–6. And how should this provoke all Christians to be much with God alone! The Romans were very ambitious of obtaining a great name, a great report, in this world; and why should not Christians be as divinely ambitious of obtaining a good name, a good report, in the other world? Heb. xi. 39. A good name is always better than a great name, and a name in heaven is infinitely better than a thousand names on earth; and the way to both these is to be much with God in secret. But,

[19.] *Nineteenthly*, Consider *that Satan is a very great enemy to secret prayer.* Secret prayer is a scourge, a hell to Satan. Every secret prayer adds to the devil's torment, and every secret sigh adds to his torment, and every secret groan adds to his torment, and every secret tear adds to his torment. When a child of God is on his knees in his secret addresses to God, oh the strange thoughts, the earthly thoughts, the wandering thoughts, the distracted thoughts, the hideous thoughts, the blasphemous thoughts, that Satan often injects into his soul! and all to wean him from secret prayer.[1] Sometimes he tells the soul, that it is in vain to seek God in secret; and at other times he tells the soul it is too late to seek God in secret; for the door of mercy is shut, and there is no hope, no help for the soul. Sometimes he tells the soul that it is enough to seek God in public; and at other times he tells the soul, that it is but a precise trick to seek the Lord in private. Sometimes he tells the soul, that it is not elected, and therefore all his secret prayers shall be rejected; and at other times he tells the soul, that it is sealed up unto the day of wrath, and therefore a secret prayer can never reverse that seal; and all this to dishearten and discourage a poor Christian in his secret retirements. Sometimes Satan will object to a poor Christian the greatness of his sins; and at other times he will object against a Christian the greatness of his unworthiness. Sometimes he will object against a Christian his want of grace; and at other times he will object against a Christian his want of gifts to manage such a duty as it should be managed. Sometimes he will object against a Christian his former straitenedness in secret prayer; and at other times he will object against a Christian the small yearnings that he makes of secret prayer; and all to work the soul out of love with secret prayer, yea, to work the soul to loathe secret prayer; so deadly an enemy is Satan to secret prayer. Oh, the strange fears, fancies, and conceits, that Satan often raises in the spirits of Christians, when they are alone with God in a corner; and all to work them to cast off private prayer. It is none of Satan's least designs to interrupt a Christian in his private trade with God. Satan watches all a Christian's motions; so that he cannot turn into his closet, nor creep into any hole to converse privately with his God, but he follows him hard at heels, and will be still injecting one thing or another into the soul, or else objecting one thing or another against the soul. A Christian is as well able to tell the stars

[1] There is no one thing that many hundred Christians have more sadly lamented and bewailed, as many faithful ministers can witness, than the sad interruptions that they have met with from Satan, when they have been with God alone in a room, in a corner. Oh! how often have they been scared, affrighted, and amazed by noises and strange apparitions, at least to their fancies, when they have been alone with God in a corner.

of heaven, and to number the sands of the sea, as he is able to number up the several devices and sleights that Satan uses to obstruct the soul's private addresses to God. Now from that great opposition that Satan makes against private prayer, a Christian may safely conclude these five things:

(1.) *First, The excellency of private prayer.* Certainly if it were not an excellent thing for a man to be in secret with God, Satan would never make such head against it.

(2.) *Secondly, The necessity of this duty.* The more necessary any duty is to the internal and eternal welfare of a Christian, the more Satan will bestir himself to blunt a Christian's spirit in that duty.

(3.) *Thirdly, The utility or profit that attends a conscientious discharge of this duty.* Where we are like to gain most, there Satan loves to oppose most.

(4.) *Fourthly, The prevalency of private prayer.* If there were not a kind of omnipotency in it, if it were not able to do wonders in heaven, and wonders on earth, and wonders in the hearts and lives and ways of men, Satan would never have such an aching tooth against it as he hath.

(5.) *Fifthly, That God is highly honoured by this duty,* or else Satan would never be so greatly enraged against it. This is certain. The more glory God hath from any service we do, the more Satan will strive by all his wiles and sleights to take us, either off from that service, or so to interrupt us in that service, that God may have no honour, nor we no good, nor himself no hurt, by our private retirements. But, in the

[20.] *Twentieth* and last place, Consider, *that you are only the Lord's secret ones, his hidden ones; and therefore if you do not apply yourselves to private prayer, and to your secret retirements, that you may enjoy God in a corner, none will.* It is only God's hidden ones, his secret ones, that are spirited, principled, and prepared to wait on God in secret: Exod. xix. 5, 'Then shall ye be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people.' The Hebrew word *segullah* signifieth God's special jewels, God's proper ones, or God's secret ones, that he keeps in store for himself, and for his own special service and use. Princes lock up with their own hands in secret their most precious and costly jewels; and so doth God his: Ps. cxxxv. 4, 'For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure,' or for his secret gem: Ps. lxxxiii. 3, 'They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones,' or thy secret ones; so called partly because God hides them in the secret of his tabernacle, Ps. xxxi. 20, and partly because God sets as high a value upon them as men do upon their hidden treasure, their secret treasure; yea, he makes more reckoning of them than he doth of all the world besides. And so the world shall know when God shall arise to revenge the wrongs and injuries that hath been done to his secret ones. Neither are there any on earth that knows so much of the secrets of his love, of the secrets of his counsels, of the secrets of his purposes, of the secrets of his heart, as his secret ones do. Neither are there any in all the world that are under those secret influences, those secret assistances, those secret incomes, those secret anointings of the Spirit, as his secret ones are under. And therefore, no wonder if God calls them again, and again, and again, his secret ones.

Now, what can be more comely or more desirable than to see their natures and their practices to answer to their names? They are the Lord's secret ones, his hidden ones; and therefore how highly doth it concern them to be much with God in secret, and to hide themselves with God in a corner! Shall Nabal's nature and practice answer to his name? 1 Sam. xxv. 25, 'Let not my Lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he: Nabal is his name, and folly is with him.' Nabal signifies *a fool*, a sot, a churl; it notes one that is void of wisdom and goodness; it signifieth one whose mind, reason, judgment, and understanding is withered and decayed. Now, if you look into the story, you shall find that as face answers to face, so Nabal's nature and practice did echo and answer to his name. And why then, should not our natures and practices answer to our names also? We are called the Lord's secret ones, his hidden ones; and how highly therefore doth it concern us to be much with God in secret! Why should there be any jarring or discord between our names and our practices? It is observable that the practice and carriage of other saints have been answerable to their names. Isaac signifies *laughter*, and Isaac was a gracious son, a dutiful son, a son that kept clear of those abominations with which many of the patriarchs had defiled themselves, a son that proved matter of laughter to his father and mother all their days. So Josiah signifies 'the fire of the Lord;' and his practice did answer to his name. Witness the pulling down of Jeroboam's altar, and his burning of the vessels that were made for Baal, and his pulling down the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had set up, and his burning the grove at the brook Kedron, and his stamping it to powder, and his breaking down the houses of the Sodomites, and his defiling of the high places where the priests had burnt incense, and his breaking in pieces the images, and cutting down the groves, and filling their places with the bones of men, &c., 1 Kings xiii. 2, 2 Kings xxiii. 4–21. So Joshua signifies 'a saviour;' and his practice was answerable to his name. Though he could not save his people from their sins, yet he often saved them from their sufferings. Great and many were the deliverances, the salvations, that were instrumentally brought about by Joshua, as all know that have read the book of Joshua. So John signifies 'gracious,' and his practice was answerable to his name. He was so gracious in his teachings and in his walkings that he gained favour in the very eyes of his enemies. By all these instances, and by many more that might be given, you see that other saints' practices have answered to their names; and, therefore, let every one of us look that our practices do also answer to our names, that as we are called the Lord's secret ones, so we may be much with God in secret, that so there may be a blessed harmony between our names and our practices, and we may never repent another day that we have been called God's secret ones, his 'hidden ones,' but yet never made conscience of maintaining secret communion with God in our closets. And thus you see that there are no less than twenty arguments to persuade you to closet prayer, and to maintain private communion with God in a corner.

The use and application of all follows.

Is it so that closet prayer or private prayer is such an indispensable

duty, that Christ himself hath laid upon all that are not willing to lie under the woful brand of being hypocrites? Then this truth looks very sourly and sadly upon these five sorts of persons.

(1.) *First,* It looks sourly and sadly upon *all those that put off secret prayer, private prayer, till they are moved to it by the Spirit;* for by this sad delusion many have been kept from secret prayer many weeks, many months; oh that I might not say, many years! Though it be a very fit season to pray when the Spirit moves us to pray, yet it is not the only season to pray, Isa. lxii. 1, Ps. cxxiii. 1, 2, Gal. iv. 6. He that makes religion his business, will pray as daily for daily grace as he doth pray daily for daily bread: Luke xviii. 1, 'And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;' 1 Thes. v. 17, 'Pray without ceasing;' Eph. vi. 18, 'Praying always[1] with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints;' Rom. xii. 12, 'Continuing instant in prayer.' The Greek is a metaphor taken from hunting dogs, that never give over the game till they have got their prey. A Christian must not only pray, but hold on in prayer, till he hath got the heavenly prize. We are wanting always; and therefore we had need be praying always. The world is always alluring; and therefore we had need be always a-praying; Satan is always a-tempting; and therefore we had need be always a-praying; and we are always a-sinning; and therefore we had need be always a-praying; and we are in dangers always; and therefore we had need be praying always; and we are dying always, 1 Cor. xv. 31; and therefore we had need be praying always. Man's whole life is but a lingering death; man no sooner begins to live, but he begins to die. When one was asked why he prayed six times a day, he only gave this answer, 'I must die, I must die, I must die.' Dying Christians had need be praying Christians, and they that are always a-dying had need be always a-praying. Certainly prayerless families are graceless families, and prayerless persons are graceless persons, Jer. x. 25. It were better ten thousand times that we had never been born into the world, than that we should go still-born out of the world. But,

(2.) *Secondly,* This truth looks sourly and sadly upon those *that pray not at all, neither in their families nor in their closets.* Among all God's children, there is not one possessed with a dumb devil. Prayerless persons are forsaken of God, blinded by Satan, hardened in sin, and every breath they draw liable to all temporal, spiritual, and eternal judgments. Prayer is that part of natural worship due to God, which none will deny but stark atheists, Ps. xiv. 1.[2]

It is observable that amongst the worst of men, Turks, and the worst of Turks, the Moors, it is a just exception against any witness, by their law, that he hath not prayed six times in every natural day, it being usual with them to pray six times a day.

(1.) Before the daybreak they pray for day.

(2.) When it is day, they give thanks for day.

[1] ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ. In every season, as occasion and opportunity offers itself, we must pray.

[2] That wicked men ought to pray, and the grand objection against their prayers answered at large in my treatise called 'The Crown and Glory of Christianity,' from page 326 to page 337. [See *sub voce*, Vol. IV.—G.]

(3.) At noon, they thank God for half the day past.
(4.) After that, they pray for a good sunset.
(5.) And after that, they thank God for the day past.

And then, sixthly and lastly, they pray for a good night after their day.

Certainly these very Moors will one day rise in judgment against them who cast off prayer, who live in a total neglect of prayer, who suffer so many suns and moons to rise and set upon their heads without any solemn calling upon God. I have read of a man who, being sick, and afraid of death, fell to his prayers; and, to move God to hear him, told him 'that he was no common beggar, and that he had never troubled him with his prayers before; and if he would but hear him at that time, he would never trouble him again.'[1] This world is full of such profane, blasphemous, atheistical wretches. But,

(3.) *Thirdly*, This truth looks very sourly and sadly upon such *who are all for public prayer, but never regard private prayer; who are all for going up to the temple, but never care for going into their closets.* This is most palpable hypocrisy, for a man to be very zealous for public prayer, but very cold and careless as to private prayer. He that pretends conscience in the one, and makes no conscience of the other, is an hypocrite in grain, Mat. xxiii. 5, and vi. 1, 2, 5; and the devil knows well enough how to make his markets of all such hypocrites that are all for the prayers of the church, but perfect Gallios as to private prayer, Acts xviii. 17. Such as perform all their private devotion in the church, but not in the chamber, do put too great a slight upon the authority of Christ, who saith, 'When thou prayest, enter into thy chamber:' he doth not say, 'When thou prayest, go to the church,' but, 'When thou prayest, go into thy *chamber*.' But,

(4.) *Fourthly*, This truth looks sadly and sourly upon such *who in their closets pray with a loud clamorous voice.* A Christian should shut both the door of his closet and the door of his lips so close, that none should hear without what he saith within. 'Enter into thy closet,' saith Christ, 'and when thou hast *shut thy door*, pray.' But what need a man shut his closet door, if he may pray with a clamorous voice, if he make such a noise as all in the street or all in the house may hear him? The hen, when she lays her eggs, gets into a hole, a corner; but then she makes such a noise with her cackling, that she tells all in the house where she is, and about what she is. Such Christians that in their closets do imitate the hen, do rather pray to be seen, heard, and observed by men, than out of any noble design to glorify God, or to pour out their souls before him that seeth in secret. Sometimes children, when they are vexed, or afraid of the rod, will run behind the door, or get into a dark hole, and there they will lie crying, and sighing, and sobbing, that all the house may know where they are. Oh it is a childish thing so to cry, and sigh, and sob in our closets, as to tell all in the house where we are, and about what work we are. Well! Christians, for an effectual redress of this evil, frequently and seriously consider of these five things.

[1.] *First, That God seeth in secret.*
[2.] *Secondly, That God hath a quick ear, and is taken more with*

[1] Heil. Mic. p. 376.

the voice of the heart, than he is with the clamour of the mouth. God can easily hear the most secret breathings of thy soul. God is more curious in observing the messages delivered by the heart, than he is those that are only delivered by the mouth. He that prays aloud in private, seems to tell others, that God doth not understand the secret desires, and thoughts, and workings of his people's hearts.

[3.] *Thirdly, It is not meet, it is not convenient nor expedient, that any should be acquainted with our secret prayers, but God and our own souls.* Now it is as much our duty to look to what is expedient, as it is to look to what is lawful, 2 Cor. viii. 10; 1 Cor. vi. 12, 'All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient.' So chap. x. 23, 'All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.' Now it is so far from being expedient, that it is very high folly for men to lay open their secret infirmities unto others, that will rather deride them, than lift up a prayer for them.

[4.] *Fourthly, Loud prayers may be a hindrance and disturbance to others, that may be busied near us, in some religious or civil exercises.*

[5.] *Fifthly* and lastly, *Hannah prayed and yet spoke never a word.* Her heart was full, but her voice was not heard, 1 Sam. i. 11. Moses prays and cries, and yet lets fall never a word: Exod. xiv. 15, 'And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherfore criest thou unto me?' Moses did not cry with any audible voice, but with inward sighs, and secret breathings, and wrestlings of soul; and these inward and secret cries, which made no noise, carried the day with God; for Moses is heard and answered, and his people are delivered. Oh the prevalency of those prayers that make no noise in the ears of others!

[5.] *Fifthly* and lastly, This truth looks sourly and sadly upon those *that do all they can to hinder and discourage others from this duty of duties, private prayer;* and that either by deriding or vilifying of the duty, or else by denying of it to be a duty, or else by their daily neglect of this duty, or else by denying them that are under them, time and opportunity for the discharge of this duty. In Mat. xxiii. 13, you have a woe pronounced against those that will neither go to heaven themselves, nor suffer others to go that are willing to enter into an everlasting rest. And so I say, Woe to those parents, and woe to those husbands, and woe to those masters and mistresses, that will neither pray in their closets themselves, nor suffer their children, nor their wives, nor their servants, to pour out their souls before the Lord in a corner. O sirs! how will you answer this to your consciences, when you shall lie upon a dying bed! and how will you answer it to the Judge of all the world, when you shall stand before a judgment seat? Certainly all their sins, and all their neglects, and all their spiritual losses, that might have been prevented by their secret prayers, by their closet communion with God, will one day be charged upon your accounts. And oh that you were all so wise as to lay these things so to heart, that you may never hinder any that are under your care or charge, from private prayer any more! But,

2. Secondly, This may serve *to exhort us, to keep close to our closets, to be frequent and constant in private prayer, to be often with God in*

a corner. The twenty considerations already laid down may serve as so many motives to provoke your hearts to this noble and necessary duty.

Objection. But many will be ready to object and say, *We have much business upon our hands, and we cannot spare time for private prayer; we have so much to do in our shops, and in our warehouses, and abroad with others, that we cannot spare time to wait upon the Lord in our closets.*

Now to this objection I shall give these eight answers, that this objection may never have a resurrection more in any of your hearts.

(1.) *First, What are all those businesses that are upon your hands, to those businesses and weighty affairs, that did lie upon the hands of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Daniel, Elias, Nehemiah, Peter, Cornelius?*[1] and yet you find all these worthies exercising themselves in private prayers. And the king is commanded every day to read some part of God's word, notwithstanding all his great and weighty employments, Deut. xvii. 18-20. Now certainly, sirs, your great businesses are little more than ciphers compared with theirs. And if there were any on earth that might have pleaded an exemption from private prayer, upon the account of business, of much business, of great business, these might have done it; but they were more honest and more noble than to neglect so choice a duty, upon the account of much business. These brave hearts made all their public employments stoop to private prayer; they would never suffer their public employments to tread private prayer under foot. But,

(2.) *Secondly,* I answer, *No men's outward affairs did ever more prosper than theirs did, who devoted themselves to private prayer, notwithstanding their many and great worldly employments.* Witness the prosperity and outward flourishing estates of Moses, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Nehemiah, David, Daniel, and Cornelius. These were much with God in their closets, and God blessed their blessings to them, Gen. xxii. 17. How did their cups overflow! What signal favours did God heap upon them and theirs! No families have been so prospered, protected, and graced, as theirs who have maintained secret communion with God in a corner, 1 Chron. xi. 9. Private prayer doth best expedite our temporal affairs. He that prays well in his closet, shall be sure to speed well in his shop, or at his plough, or whatever else he turns his hand unto, 1 Tim. iv. 8. It is true, Abimelech was rich as well as Abraham, and so was Laban rich as well as Jacob, and Saul was a king as well as David, and Julian was an emperor as well as Constantine; but it was only Abraham, Jacob, David, and Constantine, who had their blessings blessed unto them, all the rest had their blessings cursed unto them, Prov. iii. 33, Mal. ii. 2. They had many good things, but they had not 'the good will of him that dwelt in the bush' with what they had; and therefore all their mercies were but bitter-sweets unto them. Though all the sons of Jacob returned laden from Egypt with corn and money in their sacks, yet Benjamin only had the silver cup in the mouth of his sack. So though the men of the world have their corn and their money, &c., yet it is only God's Benjamins that have the silver cup, the grace cup, the cup of blessing, as the apostle calls it, for their portion, 1 Cor. x. 16. O sirs! as ever you would prosper and flourish in the world; as ever you would

[1] See the first consideration. [Pages 166–169 *ante*.—G.]

have your water turned into wine, your temporal mercies into spiritual benefits, be much with God in your closets. But,

(3.) *Thirdly*, I answer, *It is ten to one but that the objector every day fools away, or trifles away, or idles away, or sins away, one hour in a day*, and why then should he object the want of time? There are none that toil and moil and busy themselves most in their worldly employments, but do spend an hour or more in a day to little or no purpose, either in gazing about, or in dallying, or toying, or courting, or in telling of stories, or in busying themselves in other men's matters, or in idle visits, or in smoking the pipe, &c.[1] And why then should not these men redeem an hour's time in a day for private prayer, out of that time which they usually spend so vainly and idly? Can you, notwithstanding all your great worldly employments, find an hour in the day to catch flies in, as Domitian the emperor did? and to play the fool in? and cannot you find an hour in the day to wait on God in your closets?

There were three special faults whereof Cato professed himself to have seriously repented: one was, passing by water when he might have gone by land; another was, trusting a secret in a woman's bosom; but the main was, spending an hour unprofitably. This heathen will one day rise up in judgment against them who, notwithstanding their great employments, spend many hours in a week unprofitably, and yet cry out with the Duke of Alva, that they have so much to do on earth, that they have no time to look up to heaven. It was a base and sordid spirit in that King Sardanapalus, who spent much of his time amongst women in spinning and carding, which should have been spent in ruling and governing his kingdom. So it is a base sordid spirit in any, to spend any of their time in toying and trifling, and then to cry out, that they have so much business to do in the world, that they have no time for closet-prayer, they have no time to serve God, nor to save their own precious and immortal souls. But,

(4.) *Fourthly*, I answer, *No man dares plead this objection before the Lord Jesus in the great day of account*, Eccles. xi. 9; Rom. xiv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10. And why then should any man be so childish and foolish, so ignorant and impudent to plead that before men, which is not pleadable before the judgment-seat of Christ. O sirs! as you love your souls, and as you would be happy for ever, never put off your own consciences nor others' with any pleas, arguments, or objections now, that you dare not own and stand by, when you shall lie upon a dying bed, and when you shall appear before the whole court of heaven, &c. In the great day of account, when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest, and God shall call men to a reckoning before angels, men, and devils, for the neglect of private prayer, all guilty persons will be found speechless: there will not be a man or woman found, that shall dare to stand up and say, 'Lord, I would have waited upon thee in my closet, but that I had so much business to do in the world, that I had no time to enjoy secret communion with thee in a corner.' It is the greatest

[1] Myrmecides, a famous artist, spent more time in making a bee, than an unskilful workman would do to build a house.—[Plutarch, *o. v.* Varro L. lvii. ix. 62; Cicero, *Acad.* ii. 38.—G.]

wisdom in the world, to plead nothing by way of excuse in this our day, that we dare not plead in the great day. But,

(5.) *Fifthly*, I answer, *That it is our duty to redeem time from all our secular businesses for private prayer.*[1] All sorts of Christians, whether bond or free, rich or poor, high or low, superiors or inferiors, are expressly charged by God to redeem time for prayer, for private prayer, as well as for other holy exercises: Col. iv. 2, 3, 'Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds.'

But here some may object and say, We have so much business to do in the world that we have no time for prayer. The apostle answers this objection in verse 5, 'Walk in wisdom towards them that are without, redeeming the time.' So Eph. v. 16, 'Redeeming the time, because the days are evil;' ἐξαγοραζόμενοι τὸν καιρὸν, or buying out, or gaining the time. The words are a metaphor taken from merchants, who prefer the least profit that may be gained, before their pleasures or delights, closely following their business whilst the markets are at best. A merchant when he comes to a mart or fair, takes the first season and opportunity of buying his commodities; he puts it not off to the hazard of an evening, or to the next morning, in hopes to have a better bargain, but he improves the present season, and buys before the market is over.

Others carry the words thus: 'Purchase at any rate all occasions and opportunities of doing good, that so ye may thereby, in some sort, redeem that precious jewel of time which you have formerly lost.' As travellers that have loitered by the way, or stayed long at their inn, when they find night coming upon them, they mend their pace, and go as many miles in an hour as they did before in many. Though time let slip is physically irrecoverable, yet in a moral consideration, it is accounted as regained, when men double their care, diligence, and endeavours to redeem it. The best Christian is he that is the greatest monopoliser of time for private prayer. No Christian to him that redeems time from his worldly occasions and his lawful comforts and recreations, to be with God in his closet. David having tasted of the sweetness, goodness, and graciousness of God, cannot keep his bed, but will borrow some time from his sleep, that he might take some turns in paradise, and pour out his soul in prayer and praises, when no eye was open to see him, nor no ear open to hear him, but all were asleep round about him, Ps. lxiii. 6. Ps. cxix. 62, 'At midnight will I arise to give thanks unto thee.' Verse 147, 'I have prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried.' David was up and at private prayer before daybreak. David was no sluggish Christian, no slothful Christian, no lazy Christian: he used to be in his closet when others were sleeping in their beds. So ver. 148, 'Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I might meditate in thy word.' So Ps. cxxx. 6, 'My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning.' Look, as the weary sentinel in a dark, cold, wet night, waits and peeps, and peeps and waits for the appearance of the morning; so David did wait and peep, and peep and

[1] It is said of blessed Hooper, that he was spare of diet, spare of words, and sparest of time.

wait for the first and fittest season to pour out his soul before God in a corner. David would never suffer his worldly business to justle out holy exercises; he would often borrow time from the world for private prayer, but he would never borrow time from private prayer to bestow it upon the world.

Mr Bradford, the martyr, counted that hour lost wherein he did not some good, either with his pen, tongue, or purse.

Ignatius, when he heard a clock strike, would use to say, 'Now I have one hour more to answer for.'

So the primitive Christians would redeem some time from their sleep, that they might be with God in their closets, as Clemens observes.

And I have read of Theodosius [Nicephorus] the emperor, that after the variety of worldly employments relating to his civil affairs in the day time were over, how he was wont to consecrate the greatest part of the night to the studying of the Scriptures and private prayer; to which purpose he had a lamp so artificially made, that it supplied itself with oil, that so he might no way be interrupted in his private retirements.

That time ought to be redeemed, is a lesson that hath been taught by the very heathens themselves. It was the saying of Pittacus, one of the seven wise men, 'Know time, lose not a minute.' And so Theophrastus used to say, that 'Time is of precious cost.' And so Seneca: 'Time is the only thing,' saith he, 'that we can innocently be covetous of; and yet there is nothing of which many are more lavishly and profusely prodigal.' And Chrestus, a sophister of Byzantium in the time of Hadrianus the emperor, he was much given to wine; yet he always counted time so precious, that when he had misspent his time all the day, he would redeem it at night.

When Titus Vespasian, who revenged Christ's blood on Jerusalem, returned victor to Rome, remembering one night as he sat at supper with his friends, that he had done no good that day, he uttered this memorable and praiseworthy apophthegm, *Amici, diem perdidi*, 'My friends, I have lost a day.'[1]

Chilo, one of the seven sages, being asked what was the hardest thing in the world to be done, answered, 'To use and employ a man's time well.'

Cato held, that an account must be given, not only of our labour, but also of our leisure. And Ælian gives this testimony of the Lacedæmonians, 'that they were hugely covetous of their time, spending it all about necessary things, and suffering no citizen either to be idle or play.' And, saith another, 'We trifle with that which is most precious, and throw away that which is our greatest interest to redeem.'

Certainly, these heathens will rise in judgment, not only against Domitian the Roman emperor, who spent much of his time in killing of flies; nor only against Archimedes, who spent his time in drawing lines on the ground when Syracuse was taken; nor against Artaxerxes, who spent his time in making hafts for knives; nor only against Solyman the great Turk, who spent his time in making notches of horn for bows; nor only against Eropas, a Macedonian king, who spent his time in making of lanthorns; nor only against Hyrcanus the king of Parthia

[1] Suetonius, *sub nomine*—G.

who spent his time in catching of moles ;[1] but also against many professors who, instead of redeeming of precious time, do trifle and fool away much of their precious time at the glass, the comb, the lute, the viol, the pipe, or at vain sports, and foolish pastimes, or by idle jestings, immoderate sleeping, and superfluous feasting, &c. O sirs ! good hours, and blessed opportunities for closet prayer, are merchandise of the highest rate and price ; and therefore, whosoever hath a mind to be rich in grace, and to be high in glory, should buy up that merchandise,—they should be still a-redeeming precious time. O sirs ! we should redeem time for private prayer out of our eating time, our drinking time, our sleeping time, our buying time, our selling time, our sinning time, our sporting time, rather than neglect our closet communion with God, &c. But,

(6.) *Sixthly*, I answer, *Closet prayer is either a duty or it is no duty.* Now that it is a duty, I have so strongly proved, I suppose, that no man nor devil can fairly or honestly deny it to be a duty. And therefore, why do men cry out of their great business ? Alas ![2] duty must be done whatever business is left undone ; duty must be done, or the man that neglects it will be undone for ever. It is a vain thing to object business, when a required duty is to be performed ; and, indeed, if the bare objecting of business, of much business, were enough to excuse men from duty, I am afraid that there are but few duties of the gospel, but men would endeavour to evade under a pretence of business, of much business. He that pretends business to evade private prayer, will be as ready to pretend business to evade family prayer ; and he that pretends business to evade family prayer, will be as ready to pretend business to evade public prayer. Well, sirs! remember what became of those that excused themselves out of heaven, by their carnal apologies, and secular businesses : Luke xiv. 16–24. 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it ; I pray thee, have me excused,' saith one. 'I have bought,' saith another, 'five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them ; I pray thee, have me excused.' And, 'I have married a wife,' saith another, 'and therefore I cannot come.' The true reason why they would not come to the supper that the King of kings had invited them to, was not because they had bought farms and oxen, but because their farms and oxen had bought them. The things of the world and their carnal relations had taken up so much room in their hearts and affections, that they had no stomach to heaven's dainties ; and therefore it is observable what Christ adds at the end of the parable, 'He that hateth not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also,' much more his farm and oxen, 'he cannot be my disciple,' verse 26. By these words, it is evident, that it was not simply the farm nor the oxen, nor the wife, but a foolish, inordinate, carnal love and esteem of these things, above better and greater blessings, that made them refuse the gracious invitation of Christ. They refused the grace and mercy of God offering in the gospel, under a pretence of worldly business ; and God peremp-

[1] (1.) Domitian : Suetonius, *sub nomine ;* (2.) Archimedes: Plutarch, *sub nomine ;* (3.) Artaxerxes : Thucydides, *sub nomine ;* (4.) Solyman : Knolles, *as before ;* (5.) Eropus : rather, Eropon, Livy, xliv, 24, 27, 28 ; (6) Hyrcanus : spelled by Brooks, Harcanus.—G.

[2] See Glossary *sub voce* for peculiar use of this interjection elsewhere.—G.

torily concludes, that not a man of them should taste of his supper. And indeed what can be more just and righteous, than that they should never so much as taste of spiritual and eternal blessings, who prefer their earthly business before heaven's dainties; who, with the Reubenites, prefer a country commodious for the feeding of their cattle, before an interest in the land of promise. Private prayer is a work of absolute necessity, both to the bringing of the heart into a good frame, and to the keeping of the heart in a good frame. It is of absolute necessity, both for the discovery of sin, and for the preventing of sin, and for the embittering of sin, and for the weakening of sin, and for the purging away of sin. It is of absolute necessity, both for the discovery of grace, and for a full exercise of grace, and for an eminent increase of grace. It is of absolute necessity to arm us, both against inward and outward temptations, afflictions, and sufferings. It is of absolute necessity to fit us for all other duties and services, &c. For a man to glorify God, to save his own soul, and to further his own everlasting happiness, is a work of the greatest necessity. Now private prayer is such a work; and therefore why should any man plead business, great business, when a work of such absolute necessity is before him? If a man's child or wife were dangerously sick, or wounded, or near to death, he would never plead, 'I have business, I have a great deal of business to do, and therefore I cannot stay with my child, my wife; and I have no time to go or send to the physician,' &c. Oh no! but he would rather argue thus: 'It is absolutely necessary that I should look after the preservation of the life of my child, my wife, and this I will attend whatever becomes of my business.' O sirs! your souls are of greater concernment to you than the lives of all the wives and children in the world; and therefore these must be attended, these must be saved, whatever business is neglected. But,

(7.) *Seventhly*, I answer, *That God did never appoint or design any man's ordinary, particular calling to thrust private prayer out of door.*[1] That it is a great sin for any professor to neglect his particular calling under any religious pretence, is evident enough by these scriptures: Exod. xx. 9, 'Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work;' 1 Cor. vii. 20, 'Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called;' 2 Thes. iii. 10–12, 'For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy-bodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread;' 1 Thes. iv. 11, 12, 'And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing;' Eph. iv. 28, 'But rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth;' 1 Tim. v. 8, 'But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.' Yea, our Lord Jesus Christ was a plain downright

[1] Paradise was man's workhouse as well as his storehouse, Gen. ii. 15. Man should not have lived idly though he had not fallen from his innocency.

carpenter, and was laborious in that particular calling till he entered upon the public ministry, as all the ancients do agree, Mark vi. 3; Mat. xiii. 55, 56. And we read also that all the patriarchs had their particular callings. Abel was a keeper of sheep, Gen. iv. 2; Noah was a husbandman, Gen. v. 29; the sons of Jacob were shepherds and keepers of cattle, Gen. xlvi. 34, &c.; and all the apostles, before they were called to the work of the ministry, had their particular callings.

By the law of Mahomet, the great Turk himself is bound to exercise some manual trade or occupation.

Solon made a law,[1] that the son should not be bound to relieve his father when old, unless he had set himself in his youth to some occupation. And at Athens, every man gave a yearly account to the magistrate by what trade or course of life he maintained himself, which, if he could not do, he was banished. And it is by all writers condemned as a very great vanity in Dionysius, that would needs be the best poet; and Caligula, that would needs be the best orator; and in Nero, that would needs be the best fiddler; and so became the three worst princes, by minding more other men's business than their own particular calling. But for a man to evade or neglect private prayer under pretence of his particular calling, is agreeable to no scripture, yea, it is contrary to very many scriptures, as is evident by the many arguments formerly cited. Certainly no man's calling is a calling away from God or godliness. It never entered into the heart of God that our particular callings should ever drive out of doors our general calling of Christianity. Look, as our general calling must not eat up our particular calling, so our particular calling must not eat up our general calling. Certainly our particular calling must give place to our general calling. Did not the woman of Samaria leave her water-pot, and run into the city, and say, 'Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?' John iv. 28, 29. Did not the shepherds leave their flocks in the field, and go to Bethlehem, and declare the good tidings of great joy that they had heard of the angel, viz. 'That there was born that day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which was Christ the Lord'? Luke ii. 8–21. And did not Christ commend Mary for that holy neglect of her particular calling, when she sat at his feet, and heard his word? Luke x. 38, *et seq.* And what do all these instances shew, but that our particular callings must give the right hand to the general calling of Christianity? Certainly the works of our general calling are far more great and glorious, more eminent and excellent, more high and noble, than the works of our particular callings are; and therefore it is much more tolerable for our general calling to borrow time of our particular calling, than it is for our particular calling to borrow time of our general calling. Certainly those men are very ignorant or very profane, that either think themselves so closely tied up to follow their particular callings six days in the week, as that they must not intermeddle with any religious services, or that think their particular callings to be a gulf or a grave designed by God to swallow up private prayer in. God, who is the Lord of time, hath reserved some part of our time to himself every day. Though the Jews were commanded to labour six days of the week, yet they were commanded also to offer up morning and

[1] Plutarch, in the Life of Solon.

evening sacrifice daily, Deut. vi. 6–8; Exod. xxix. 38, 39; Num. xxviii. 3.

The Jews divided the day into three parts:

The first, to prayer;

The second, for the reading of the law;

And the third, for the works of their lawful callings.

As bad as the Jews were, yet they every day set a part of the day apart for religious exercises. Certainly they are worse than Jews that spend all their time about their particular callings, and shut closet-prayer quite out of doors. Certainly that man's soul is in a very ill case, who is so entangled with the incumbrances of the world, that he can spare no time for private prayer. If God be the Lord of thy mercies, the Lord of thy time, and the Lord of thy soul, how canst thou, with any equity or honour, put off his service under a pretence of much business? That man is lost, that man is cursed, who can find time for anything, but none to meet with God in his closet. That man is doubtless upon the brink of ruin, whose worldly business eats up all thoughts of God, of Christ, of heaven, of eternity, of his soul, and of his soul concernments. But,

(8.) *Eighthly, and lastly,* I answer, *The more worldly business lies upon thy hand, the more need hast thou to keep close to thy closet.* Much business lays a man open to many sins, and to many snares, and to many temptations. Now, the more sins, snares, and temptations a man's business lays him open to, the more need that man hath to be much in private prayer, that his soul may be kept pure from sin, and that his foot may not be taken in the devil's trap, and that he may stand fast in the hour of temptation. Private prayer is so far from being a hindrance to a man's business, that it is the way of ways to bring down a blessing from heaven upon a man's business, Ps. i. 2, 3; cxxvii. 1, 2; cxxviii. 1, 2; as the first-fruits that God's people gave to him brought down a blessing from heaven upon all the rest, Deut. xxvi. 10, 11. Whet is no let; prayer and provender never hinders a journey. Private prayer is like to Jacob, that brought down a blessing from heaven upon all that Laban had, Gen. xxx. 27, 30. Private prayer gives a man a sanctified use, both of all his earthly comforts, and of all his earthly business; and this David and Daniel found by experience: and therefore it was not their great public employments that could take them off from their private duties. Time spent in heavenly employments, is no time lost from worldly business, Deut. xxviii. 1–8. Private prayer makes all we take in hand successful. Closet-prayer hath made many rich, but it never made any man poor or beggarly in this world. No man on earth knows what may be the emergencies, or the occurrences of a day: Prov. xxvii. 1, 'Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.' Every day is as it were a great-bellied day; every day is as it were with child of something, but what it will bring forth, whether a cross or a comfort, no man can tell; as whilst a woman is with child, no man can tell what kind of birth it will be. No man knows what mercies a day may bring forth, no man knows what miseries a day may bring forth; no man knows what good a day may bring forth, no man knows what evil a day may bring forth;

no man knows what afflictions a day may bring forth, no man knows what temptations a day may bring forth; no man knows what liberty a day may bring forth, no man knows what bonds a day may bring forth; no man knows what good success a day may bring forth, no man knows what bad success a day may bring forth; and therefore, a man had need be every day in his closet with God, that he may be prepared and fitted to entertain and improve all the occurrences, successes, and emergencies that may attend him in the course of his life. And let thus much suffice for answer to this first objection. But,

Obj. 2. *Secondly,* Others may object and say, *Sir, we grant that private prayer is an indispensable duty that lies upon the people of God; but we are servants, and we have no time that we can call our own, and our master's business is such as will not allow us any time for private prayer, and therefore we hope we may be excused.*

Solution (1.) *First, The text is indefinite, and not limited to any sort or rank of persons, whether high or low, rich or poor, bond or free, servant or master.* 'But *thou,* when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret.'[1] Here are three *thous,* thou, thou, thou, which are to be understood indefinitely: thou servant as well as thou master, thou bondman as well as thou freeman, thou poor man as well as thou rich man, thou maid as well as thou mistress, thou child as well as thou father, thou wife as well as thou husband. Private prayer is an indispensable duty that lies upon all sorts and ranks of persons. A man may as well say that that pronoun *tu, thou,* that runs through the ten commandments,—Exod. xx. 3–18, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. Six days shalt thou labour. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's,' &c.,—relates to the rich, and not to the poor, to masters and not to servants, to the free and not to them that are in bonds, &c., as he may say, that the three *thous* in the text relates to the rich and not to the poor, to masters and not to servants, to those that are free but not to those that are bound; but certainly there is no man in his wits that will say so, that will affirm such a thing. Doubtless this pronoun *thou* reacheth every man, of what rank or quality soever he be in this world. But,

(2.) *Secondly,* I answer, *That the first, the third, the fourth, the fifth, the sixth, the seventh, and the eighth answers that are given to the first objection, are here very applicable;* and oh that all masters and servants were so wise, so serious, and so ingenuous, as to lay all those answers warm on their own hearts! It might be a means to prevent much sin, and to bespeak masters and mistresses to give their pious servants a little more time to lift up their hearts to Christ in a corner. But,

(3.) *Thirdly,* I answer, *If thou art a servant that hast liberty to choose a new master, thou wert better remove thy station than live*

[1] Private prayer is a duty, that lieth upon saints as saints.

under such a master's roof, who is such an enemy to God, to Christ, to religion, to himself, and to the eternal welfare of thy poor soul, as that he will not give thee half an hour's time in a day to spend in thy chamber, thy closet, though the glory of God, the good of his own family, and the everlasting happiness of thine own soul, is concerned in it, Ps. lxxxiv. 10, cxx. 5. It is better for thee to shift thy master, than to neglect thy duty: 1 Cor. vii. 21, 'Art thou called, being a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.' We lost our liberty by sin, and we affect nothing more than liberty by nature.[1]

The Rabbins say of liberty, that 'if the heavens were parchment, the sea ink, and every pile of grass a pen, the praises of it could not be comprised nor expressed.' Laban's house was full of idols. Great houses are often so. Jacob's tent was little, but the true worship of God was in it. It is infinitely better to live in Jacob's tent, than in Laban's house. It is best being with such masters where we may have least of sin, and most of God; where we may have the most helps, the best examples, and the choicest encouragements to be holy and happy.

The religious servant should be as careful in the choice of his master, as the religious master is careful in the choice of his servant. Gracious servants are great blessings to the families where they live; and that master may well be called the unhappy master, who will rather part with a gracious servant, than spare him a little time in a day to pour out his soul before the Lord in a corner. But,

(4.) *Fourthly,* I answer, *If thou art a gracious servant, then thou art spirited and principled by God, to this very purpose, that thou mayest cry, Abba, Father, when thou art alone, when thou art in a corner, and no eye seeth thee, but his who seeth in secret,* Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 6; 1 Cor. vi. 19; 2 Tim. i. 14. If thou art a gracious servant, then thou hast received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, 1 Cor. ii. 12. Now, he that hath this tree of life, he hath also the fruit that grows upon this tree: Gal. v. 22, 23, 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, &c. Now, grace is called, not the *works* of the Spirit, but the *fruits* of the Spirit.

(1.) Because all grace is derived from the Spirit as the fruit is derived from the root. And,

(2.) To note the pleasantness and delightfulness of grace, for what is more pleasant and delightful than sweet and wholesome fruits? Cant. iv. 16, vi. 2.

(3.) To note the profit and advantage that doth redound to them that have the Spirit; for as many grow rich by the fruits of their gardens and orchards, so many grow rich in grace, in holiness, in comfort, in spiritual experiences, by the fruits of the Spirit. Now why hath God given thee his Spirit, and why hath he laid into thy soul a stock of supernatural graces, but that thou mayest be every way qualified, disposed, and fitted for private prayer, and to maintain secret communion with God in a corner?

Certainly God never gave any poor servant a talent of gifts, or a

[1] Justinus the second emperor's motto was, *Libertas res inestimabilis,* Liberty is invaluable.

talent of grace, but in order to his driving of a secret trade heavenward.

(5.) *Fifthly*, I answer, *Though king Darius had made a decree that none should ask any petition of any god or man, for thirty days, upon the penalty of being cast into the den of lions, yet Daniel, who was both a subject and a servant to king Darius, and one upon whose hands the chiefest and greatest affairs of the kingdom did lie, did keep up his private devotions.* In the first and second verses of that sixth of Daniel, you will find that Daniel had abundance of great and weighty employments upon his hands; he was set over the whole affairs of the whole empire of Persia, and he with two other presidents, of whom himself was chief, were to receive the accounts of the whole kingdom from all those hundred and twenty princes, which in the Persian monarchy were employed in all public businesses. And yet, notwithstanding such a multiplicity of business as lay upon his hands, and notwithstanding his servile condition, yet he was very careful to redeem time for private prayer; yea, it is very observable that the heart of Daniel, in the midst of all his mighty businesses, was so much set upon private prayer, upon his secret retirements for religious exercises, that he runs the hazard of losing all his honours, profits, pleasures, yea, and life itself, rather than he would be deprived of convenient time and opportunities to wait upon God in his chamber. Certainly Daniel will one day rise in judgment against all those subjects and servants who think to evade private prayer by their pleas of much business, and of their being servants, &c. But,

(6.) *Sixthly*, I answer, *If you who are gracious servants, notwithstanding your masters' businesses, cannot redeem a little time to wrestle with God in a corner, what singular thing do you?* What do you more than others? Do you hear? So do others. Do you read? So do others. Do you follow your masters to public prayers? So do others. Do you join with your masters in family prayers? So do others. Oh! but now gracious servants should go beyond all other servants in the world, they should do singular things for God: Mat. v. 47, 'What do you more than others?' τί περισσὸν ποιεῖτε? What extraordinary thing do you? What more ordinary than to find servants follow their masters to public prayers and to family prayers? Oh! but now to find poor servants to redeem a little time from their masters' business to pour out their souls before the Lord in a corner, this is not ordinary, yea, this is extraordinary, and this doth wonderfully well become gracious servants. Oh! that all men's servants, who are servants to the most high God, would seriously consider,

[1.] *How singularly they are privileged by God above all other servants in the world.* They are called, adopted, reconciled, pardoned, justified before the throne of God, which other servants are not, &c., 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. And why then should not such servants be singular in their services, who are so singular in their privileges?

[2.] *Secondly, Gracious servants are made partakers of a more excellent nature than other servants are.* 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these you might be made partakers of the divine nature.' The apostle in this expression doth not aim at any essential change and conversion of

our substance into the nature of God and Christ, but only at the elevation and dignifying of our nature by Christ. Though that real, that near, that dear, that choice, that mysterious, that peculiar, that singular, union that Christians have with Christ, doth raise them up to a higher similitude and likeness of God and Christ than ever they had attained to in their primitive perfection; yet it doth not introduce any real transmutation, either of our bodies or souls, into the divine nature. It is certain that our union and conjunction with Christ doth neither mingle persons nor unite substances, but it doth enjoin our affections, and brings our wills into a league of amity with Christ.[1] To be made partaker of the divine nature notes two things, say some.

First, A fellowship with God in his holiness;

Secondly, A fellowship with God in his blessedness, viz., in the beatifical vision and brightness of glory. To be made 'partakers of the divine nature,' say others, is to be made partakers of those holy graces, those divine qualities, which sometimes are called, 'the image of God, the likeness of God, the life of God,' &c., Eph. iv. 24, Col. iii. 10, whereby we resemble God, not only as a picture doth a man in outward lineaments, but as a child doth his father in countenance and conditions. Now, take the words which way you will, how highly doth it concern those servants, that are made partakers of the divine nature, to do singular things for God, to do such things for God, that other servants, that are not partakers of the divine nature, have no mind, no heart, no spirit to do! yea, that they refuse and scorn to do!

[3.] *Thirdly, Gracious servants are worthily descended;* they have the most illustrious extraction and honourable original, 1 John v. 19; John iii. 8; James ii. 5.

[4.] *Fourthly, Gracious servants are worthily attended, they are nobly guarded;* Ps. xxxiv. 15; Heb. i. 14; Deut. xxxiii. 26, 27; Zech. ii. 5.

[5.] *Fifthly, Gracious servants are worthily dignified;* they are dignified with the highest and most honourable titles, 1 Peter i. 2, 9; Rev. i. 5, 6; v. 10.

[6.] *Sixthly, Take many things in one: gracious servants have more excellent graces, experiences, comforts, communions, promises, assurances, discoveries, hopes, helps, principles, diet, raiment, portion, than all other servants in the world have;* and therefore God may well expect better and greater things from them than from all other servants in the world. God may very well expect that they should do singular things for his glory, who hath done such singular things for their good. Certainly God expects that gracious servants should be a-blessing of him, when other servants are a-blaspheming of him; that they should be a-magnifying of him, when other servants are a-debasing of him; that they should be a-redeeming of precious time, when other servants are a-trifling, fooling, playing or sinning away of precious time; that they should be a-weeping in a corner, when other servants are a-sporting and making themselves merry among their jovial companions; that they should be a-mourning in secret, when other servants

[1] None but Familists will say that we are made partakers of the substance of the Godhead, for that is incommunicable to any creature. The essence of God cannot be imparted to any created beings.

are a-sinning in secret; and that they should be at their private devotion, when other servants are sleeping and snorting, &c.

Solomon, that was the wisest prince that ever sat upon a throne, and who was guided by an infallible Spirit, hath delivered it for a standing maxim above two thousand years ago, 'that the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour,' Prov. xii. 26. When Solomon dropped this aphorism from his royal pen, there was not a man in the world that was legally righteous; Adam and all his posterity being fallen from all their honour, glory, dignity, and excellency, into a most woful gulf of sin and misery; and therefore Solomon must be understood of him that is evangelically righteous, Ps. xiv. 1–3; Rom. iii. 9–12; Lam. v. 16. He that is evangelically righteous, be he master or servant, rich or poor, bond or free, high or low, is more excellent than his neighbour. And oh that all masters would seriously consider of this, that they may carry it no more so proudly, so loftily, so scornfully, so forwardly, so strangely, so sourly, so bitterly, so rigorously, towards their pious servants, as not to afford them a little time to pour out their souls before the Lord in a corner!

I have read of Ingo, an ancient king of the *Draves*[1] and *Veneds*,[2] who, making a stately feast, appointed all his pagan nobles to sit in the hall below; and at the same time commanded certain poor Christians to be brought up into his presence-chamber, to sit with him at his table, that they might eat of his kingly cheer; at which many wondering, he told them, that he accounted Christians, though never so poor, a greater ornament at his table, and more worthy of his company, than the greatest nobles that were not converted to the Christian faith; for saith he, when these pagan nobles shall be thrust down to hell, these poor Christians shall be my consorts and fellow-princes in heaven.[3] Certainly, this noble prince will one day rise in judgment against all sour, churlish Labans, who carry it so harshly and so severely towards their gracious servants, as that they will not allow them a little time to wait upon God in a hole, Eph. vi. 9. Why should not gracious masters give their gracious servants a little time for closet prayer now, considering that they are sharers with them in all the fundamental good that comes by Christ in this world; and considering that they shall be partakers with them in all the glory of another world? The poorest servant in a family hath a soul more precious than heaven and earth; and the greatest work that lies upon his hand in this world, is to look to the eternal safety and security of that: for if that be safe, all is safe; if that be well, all is well; but if that be lost, all is lost.[4] Every gracious servant, though he be never so poor and mean, yet hath he the image of God, the image of the King of kings stamped upon him; and woe to him that shall wrong, or despise, or trample upon that image! Certainly, God himself is wronged by the injury that is done to his image. The contempt and despite that is done to the image or coin of a king, is done to the king himself; and accordingly he will revenge it.

[1] Qu. Inhabitants of the territories on the Dravus? [Strabo, vii.]—G.

[2] The Venedae. [Tacitus, *Germ* 46. Pliny, iv. 13, and 27.]—G.

[3] Æneæus Sylvius Annalium, cap xx *Europ. Aven. lib.* 3.

[4] Every man hath two things to look unto more than all the world beside, a body and a soul: for the one, every one is either a fool or a physician; for the other, either a devil or a divine, saith one.

If it was a capital crime in Tiberius his days, to carry the image of Augustus upon a ring or coin into any sordid place, as Suetonius saith it was; what crime must it be in those masters who despise, revile, reproach, scorn, abuse, and tread under foot, such servants as have the image of the great God stamped upon their souls, and all because they look God-ward, Christ-ward, heaven-ward, holiness-ward, duty-ward? Masters should never twit their servants in the teeth with their inferiority, penury, poverty, misery, mean parentage, or servile condition; but remember that these things are more the Creator's pleasure than the servant's fault, and that that God that hath made the master rich and the servant poor, can as quickly make the master poor and the servant rich, Prov. xxii. 2, xvii. 5. God many times puts down the mighty from their seats, and exalts them of low degree, Luke i. 52. Certainly, no master nor mistress should dare to insult or triumph over such servants as have souls as noble as their own; but they should seriously and frequently consider of Solomon's aphorism, 'The righteous, though a servant,' though the meanest among all the servants, 'is more excellent than his neighbour,' and accordingly give them a little time and liberty to converse with God in secret. And oh that all gracious servants would discover themselves to be more excellent than their neighbours, by making more conscience of private prayer than their neighbours do, and by being more in their closets than their neighbours are, and by delighting themselves in their secret retirements more than their neighbours will, and by redeeming some time for God, for their souls, and for eternity, more than their neighbours do. But,

(7.) *Seventhly*, I answer, *That God is only the Lord of time.*[1] Time is more the Lord's than it is thy master's; and therefore it is no neglecting of thy master's business, to take a little time daily for private prayer. Times do belong to providence as well as issues; and as God is the God of our mercies, so he is the Lord of our times: 'My times are in thy hands,' saith David, Ps. xxxi. 15. Not only the times of his sorrows, but also the times of his comforts; not only the times of his miseries, but also the times of his mercies; not only the times of his dangers, but also the times of his duties, were in the hands of God.

It is observable the Psalmist doth not say time, but times, in the plural, to shew that every point and period of time depends upon the hand of God.

One, complaining of those who say, Come, let us talk together, to pass away the time, with grief of spirit cries out, *O donec prætereat hora*, &c., 'Oh until the hour be gone, oh until time be past, which the mercy of thy Maker hath bestowed upon thee to perform repentance, to procure pardon, to gain grace, and to obtain glory.'[2] That servant that borrows a little time every day to seek the face of God in a corner, borrows it rather of God than of his master; and therefore why should his master swell, or rage, or complain, considering that God never made him Lord of time? But,

(8.) *Eighthly*, I answer, *That servants should rather redeem time from their sleep, their recreations, their daily meals, than neglect closet-duty a day.* And certainly those servants that, out of conscience

[1] Hab ii. 3; Dan. xi. 27, 29, 35; Job vii. 1; Ps. cii. 13; Eccles. iii. 1; Dan. ii. 21; Isa. lx. 22; Job xiv. 14.

[2] Bernard, serm. *de tripl. custod.*

towards God, and out of a due regard to the internal and eternal welfare of their own souls, shall every day redeem an hour's time from their sleep, or sports, or feedings, to spend with God in secret, they shall find by experience that the Lord will make a few hours' sleep sweeter and better than many hours' sleep to them; and their outward sports shall be made up with inward delights; and for their common bread, God will feed them with that bread that came down from heaven. Sirs, was not Christ his Father's servant?[1] Isa. xlii. 1. 'Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect' (or choice one), 'in whom my soul delighteth' (or is well pleased)! 'I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.' And did not he redeem time from his natural rest, rather than he would omit private prayer? Mark i. 35, 'And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.' Christ spent the day in preaching, in healing the sick, in working of miracles; and rather than these noble works should shut out private prayer, he rises a great while before day, that he might have some time to wrestle with his Father in secret. So Luke vi. 12, 'And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.' O sirs! did Christ spend whole nights in private prayer for the salvation of your souls; and will you think it much to redeem an hour's time from your natural rest to seek and to serve him in a corner, and to make sure the things of your everlasting peace? The redeeming of time for private prayer is the redeeming of a precious treasure, which, if once lost, can never fully be recovered again. If riches should make themselves wings, and fly away, they may return again, as they did to Job; or if credit, and honour, and worldly greatness and renown, should fly away, they may return again, as they did to Nebuchadnezzar; if success, and famous victories and conquests, should make themselves wings, and fly away, they may return again, as they did to many of the Roman conquerors and others; but if time, whom the poets paint with wings, to shew the volubility and swiftness of it, fly from us, it will never more return unto us.[2]

A great lady [Queen Elizabeth] of this land, on her dying bed cried out, 'Call time again, call time again; a world of wealth for an inch of time!' but time past was never, nor could never be recalled.

The Egyptians drew the picture of time with three heads.

The first was of a greedy wolf gaping for time past, because it hath ravenously devoured even the memory of so many things past recalling.

The second of a crowned lion roaring for time present, because it hath the principality of all action, for which it calls aloud.

And the third was of a deceitful dog, fawning for time to come, because it feeds fond men with many flattering hopes, to their eternal undoing. Oh that all this might prevail with servants to redeem time for private prayer! And if my counsel might take place, I should rather advise servants to redeem some time for private prayer from their sleep or lawful recreations, or set meals, &c., than to spend in private prayer that time which their masters call their time, especially

[1] The evangelist applies these words to Christ, Mat. xii. 15–18. Christ is called God's servant in regard of his human nature, and in regard of his office of mediatorship.

[2] Sophocles, Phocilides, &c. [Qu. Philoctetes, *as before.*—G.]

if their masters be unconverted, and in 'the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity;' and that for these five reasons.

[1.] *First, Because this may be a means to prevent much sin on the master's side.* Masters that are in their unregenerate estate are very apt to storm, and take on, and let fly against God, and Christ, and religion, and profession, &c., when they see their servants spend that time in private prayer, or in any other religious exercise, which, according to their understanding, is their time, and ought to be wholly spent in following their businesses. Now gracious servants should have that honourable respect, and that tender affection, and that Christian compassion to their masters' souls, as to do to the utmost all that lies in them to prevent their masters from contracting guilt upon their souls, or from making work for repentance, for hell, or for the physician of souls, Jude 22, 23.

The Persians, the Turks, and many Indians are so compassionate, that they erect hospitals not only for lame and diseased men, but also for birds, beasts, and dogs that are either aged, starved, or hurt. Oh then, what tender compassions should gracious servants exercise towards their masters' souls, which are jewels more worth than heaven and earth! But,

[2.] *Secondly, Because this may be a means to convince the judgments and consciences of their masters, that there is some worth, some excellency, some sweetness, &c., to be found in private prayer, and in other closet-duties;* for when masters shall observe their servants to redeem time for closet duties, from their very sleep, recreations, dinners, suppers, they will be ready to conclude, that certainly there is more worth, more goodness, more sweetness, more excellency, more glory, more gain in closet duties, than ever they have understood, felt, or experienced, &c., and that their very poor servants are better and more righteous than themselves. Sozomen reports, that the devout life of a poor captive Christian woman, made a king and all his family embrace the faith of Jesus Christ. Good works convince more than miracles themselves.

I have read of one Pachomius, a soldier under Constantine the emperor, how that his army being almost starved for want of necessary provision, he came to a city of Christians, and they of their own charity relieved them speedily and freely; he wondering at their free and noble charity, inquired what kind of people they were whom he saw so bountiful? It was answered that they were Christians, whose profession it is to hurt no man, and do good to every man. Hereupon Pachomius, convinced of the excellency of this religion, threw away his arms, and became a Christian, a saint.[1] Look as husbands sometimes are won by the conversation of their wives without the word, 1 Peter iii. 1, 2; so masters may sometimes be won by the gracious carriage and conversation of their servants, without the word. The servant's redeeming of time for private duties, upon the hardest and severest terms, may be so blessed to the master, that it may issue in his conviction, conversion, and salvation. There is a *may-be* for it; and a very may-be should be a sufficient encouragement for every gracious servant to do all he can to save the soul of his master from going down into the infernal pit. But,

[1] Sozomen H. E. III. *et alibi.*—G.

[3.] *Thirdly, Because the servant's redeeming of time from his sleep, recreations, meals, for private prayer, will most clearly and abundantly evidence the singular love, the great delight, and the high esteem that he hath of private prayer.* We say those children love their books well, and delight much in learning, who will be at their books when others are gone to their beds, and who will be at their books before others can get out of their beds. Certainly they love private prayer well, and they delight much in closet communion with God, who will be a-praying when others are a-sleeping, and who will be a-dressing their souls before God in a corner, before their mistress is a-dressing of herself at the glass, or their fellow-servants a-dressing themselves in the shop. But,

[4.] *Fourthly, Because the servant's redeeming of time for private prayer, from his sleep, set meals, recreations, &c., may be of most use to other fellow-servants, both to awaken them, and to convince them that the things of religion are of the greatest and highest importance, and that there is no trade, or pleasure, or profit, to that private trade that is driven between God and a man's own soul;* and also to keep them from trifling, or fooling away of that time, which is truly and properly their masters' time, and by the royal law of heaven ought to be spent solely and wholly in their service and business. For what ingenuous servant is there in the world but will argue thus? I see that such and such of my fellow-servants will redeem time for private prayer, and for other closet-services, from their very sleep, meals, recreations, &c.; rather than they will borrow, or make bold with that time which my master saith is his, &c.; and why then should I be so foolish, so brutish, so mad, to trifle, or idle, or play, or toy away that time which should be spent in my master's service, and for my master's advantage? But,

[5.] *Fifthly,* and lastly, *Because the servant's redeeming of time for private prayer from his sleep, his meals, his recreations, &c., cannot but be infinitely pleasing to God; and that which will afford him most comfort when he comes to die.* The more any poor heart acts contrary to flesh and blood, the more he pleases God; the more any poor heart denies himself, the more he pleases God; the more any poor heart acts against the stream of sinful examples, the more he pleases God; the more difficulties and discouragements a poor heart meets with in the discharge of his duty, the more love he shews to God; and the more love a poor heart shews to God, the more he pleases God: Jer. ii. 2, 3, 'Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the first-fruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord.' God was very highly pleased and greatly delighted with the singular love and choice affections of his people towards him, when they followed after him, and kept close to him, in that tedious and uncouth passage through the waste, howling wilderness. How all these things do comport with that poor pious servant that redeems time for private prayer upon the hardest terms imaginable, I shall leave the ingenuous reader to judge. And certainly, upon a dying bed, no

tongue can express, nor heart conceive but he that feels it, the unspeakable comfort that closet-duties will afford to him that hath been exercised in them, upon those hard terms that are under present consideration. But,

(9.) *Ninthly*, I answer, *If thou art a gracious servant, then the near and dear relations that is between God and thee, and the choice privileges that thou art interested in, calls aloud for private prayer*, John viii. 32, 33, 36. As thou art thy Master's servant, so thou art the Lord's free-man: 1 Cor. vii. 22, 23, 'For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's free-man; likewise, also he that is called being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye servants of men,'—either when they command you things forbidden by Christ, or forbid you things commanded by Christ; or when they would exercise a dominion over your faith, or a lordship over your consciences. Suffer not yourselves in spiritual things to be brought into such bondage by any men or masters in the world, as not to use that freedom and liberty that Christ hath purchased for you with his dearest blood, Gal. v. 1, Col. ii. 20, Gal. ii. 4. No servants are to serve their masters in opposition to Christ; nor no servants are to serve their masters as spiritual masters; nor no servants are to serve their masters as supreme masters, but as subordinate masters, Eph. vi. 5–7. And as every gracious servant is the Lord's free-man, so every gracious servant is the Lord's friend, Isa. xli. 8, James ii. 23, John xv. 13–15. And as every gracious servant is the Lord's friend, so every gracious servant is the Lord's son, Gal. iv. 5, 6, Rom. viii. 16. And as every gracious servant is the Lord's son, so every gracious servant is the Lord's spouse, Hosea ii. 19, 20, 2 Cor. xi. 2.

And now I appeal to the consciences of all that have tasted that the Lord is gracious, whether the near and dear relations that is between the Lord and pious servants doth not call aloud upon them to take all opportunities and advantages that possibly they can to pour out their souls before the Lord in secret, and to acquaint him in a corner with all their secret wants, and weaknesses, and wishes, &c. And as gracious servants are thus nearly and dearly related to God, so gracious servants are very highly privileged by God. Gracious servants are as much freed from the reign of sin, the dominion of sin, and the damnatory power of sin, as gracious masters are, Rom. vi. 14. Gracious servants are as much freed from hell, from the curse of the law, and from the wrath of God, as their gracious masters are, Rom. viii. 1. Gracious servants are as much adopted, as much reconciled, as much pardoned, as much justified, and as much redeemed, as their gracious masters are, Gal. iii. 13. Gracious servants are as much heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, as their gracious masters are.[1] Gracious servants are as much a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, called out of darkness into his marvellous light, as their gracious masters are. And therefore they being all alike interested in all these great and glorious privileges which belong to saints as saints, they are, without all peradventure, alike obliged and engaged to all those duties which lies upon saints as saints, among which

[1] 1 Thes. i. 10; Col. iii. 11; Gal. v. 6; Rom. viii. 17; Gal. vi. 14; 1 Peter ii. 9.

private prayer is one; and therefore they are to buckle to this duty against all carnal reasons and objections whatsoever. But,

(10.) *Tenthly*, and lastly, I answer, *that the promised reward in the text lies as fair and as open to the servant as to the master, to the bond as to the free, to the peasant as to the prince.* Whosoever prays to his heavenly Father in secret, be he high or low, rich or poor, honourable or base, servant or master, he shall receive an open reward. The reward in the text is not to be confined or limited to this or that sort or rank of men, but it is to be extended to all ranks and sorts of men that make conscience of private prayer, of closet duties. So Eph. vi. 5–8, 'Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ. Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart: with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.' Col. iii. 22–24, 'Servants obey, in all things, your masters, according to the flesh, not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Jesus Christ.'[1] Such servants as serve their masters faithfully, cordially, and in singleness of spirit, shall receive the reward of grace and the reward of the inheritance. The meanest servant that is faithful in the service of his master, shall for a recompence receive the eternal inheritance, Rom. viii. 15–17. The recompence of reward in the scripture last cited is not of merit, but of mere grace, because the inheritance belongs only to children upon the account of their birth or adoption. Faithful servants shall of servants be made sons, and so enjoy the heavenly inheritance. Christ is so noble a master, that he will not suffer any service that hath been performed to men out of conscience to his command to pass unrewarded. Oh how much more will he recompense pious servants for those spiritual services that they perform for his sake, for his glory! God is so liberal a paymaster, that no man shall so much as shut the door, or kindle a fire upon his altar, or give a cup of cold water—one of the least, readiest, and meanest refreshments that be—but he shall be rewarded, Mal. i. 10, Mat. x. 42.

It is an excellent observation of Calvin, upon God's rewarding of the Rechabites' obedience, Jer. xxxv. 19, 'God,' saith he, 'often recompenseth the shadows and seeming appearances of virtue, to shew that complacency he takes in the ample rewards that he hath reserved for true and sincere piety.' Nebuchadnezzar, though a tyrant, yet being engaged in God's service against Tyre, he shall have Egypt as his pay, for his pains at Tyre, Ezek. xxix. 18–20. It is an ancient slur and slander that hath been cast upon God, as if he were an austere master, an illiberal Lord, and as if there were nothing to be got in his service but knocks, blows, wounds, crosses, losses, &c., whereas he is a rewarder, not only of them that diligently seek him, but even of the very worst of men that do any service for him, Heb. xi. 6. I have read of Herod

[1] The Persian kings did usually reward the faithful services of their servants. Surely the King of kings will not fall short of the kings of Persia?

Agrippa, the same that was smitten by the angel and eaten up of worms, because he gave not glory to God, Acts xii. 23, that, being bound in chains, and sent to prison by Tiberius for wishing Caius in the empire, one Thaumastus, a servant of Caius, carrying a pitcher of water, met him, and Agrippa being very thirsty, desired him to give him some of his water to drink, which he willingly did: whereupon Agrippa said, 'This service thou hast done in giving me drink, shall do thee good another day.' And he was as big and as good as his word; for afterwards, when Caius was emperor, and Agrippa made king of Judea, he first got his liberty, then made him chief officer of his household, and after his decease took order that he should continue in the same office with his son.[1] Now how much more then will the King of kings reward all those poor pious servants of his, that do not only give to him in his members cups of cold water, but do also redeem time from their very rest, meals, and recreations, that they may have some time to seek the face of God in a corner. Certainly, there shall not be a sigh, a groan, a prayer, a tear let fall by a poor servant in a corner, that shall not be at last regarded and rewarded by the great God. Lyra saith, that Mordecai waited six years, before his good service was rewarded by king Ahasuerus. It may be God may reward thee sooner for all thy closet services; but if he do not reward thee sooner, he will certainly reward thee better, he will reward thee with higher honours, with greater dignities, with more glorious robes, and with a more royal crown, even an incorruptible crown, a crown of righteousness, a crown of life, a crown of glory, 1 Cor. ix. 29; 2 Tim. iv. 8; Rev. ii. 10; James i. 12; 1 Pet. v. 4. And therefore hold on and hold out in your secret retirements. Though some may deride you, and others revile you, and your carnal masters discourage you, yet God is faithful and will certainly reward you; yea, he will openly reward you for all the secret pourings out of your souls in his bosom. But,

Obj. 3. Some may further object and say, *Oh but we cannot pray alone; we want those gifts and endowments which others have; we are shut up and know not how to pour out our souls before God in a corner; we would willingly pray, but we want ability to pour out our souls before the Lord in secret, &c.*

Solution 1. *God's dearest children may sometimes be shut up; they may with Zacharias, for a time, be struck dumb, and not able to speak,* Luke i. 20; Ps. lxxvii. 4. 'I am so troubled that I cannot speak,' Ps. xxxviii. 9. 'Lord, all my desire is before thee: and my groaning is not hid from thee.' God's dearest children have sometimes been so shut up, that they have been able to say nothing, nor to do nothing but groan. A child of God may sometimes meet with such a blow from God, from conscience, from Scripture, from Satan, from the world, that may for a time so astonish him, that he may not be able to speak to God, nor speak to others, nor speak to his own heart. Look, as the Holy Spirit is not always a teaching Spirit, nor always a leading Spirit, nor always a comforting Spirit, nor always a sealing Spirit, nor always a witnessing Spirit, nor always an assuring Spirit to any of the saints; so he is not always a supplicating Spirit in any of the saints. When he is grieved, vexed, quenched, provoked, he may suspend his gracious

[1] Josephus, *Antiq.* lib. 18, cap. 8.

influences, and deny the soul his assistance; and what can a Christian then say or do? But,

[2.] *Secondly*, I answer, *Thou canst not pray; but canst thou not sigh, nor groan neither?* There may be the Spirit of adoption in sighs and groans, as well as in vocal prayer, Rom. viii. 26. The force, the virtue, the efficacy, the excellency of prayer doth not consist in the number and flourish of words, but in the supernatural motions of the Spirit, in sighs, and groans, and pangs, and strong affections of heart, that are unspeakable and unutterable. Certainly, the very soul of prayer lies in the pouring out of a man's soul before the Lord, though it be but in sighs, groans, and tears, 1 Sam. i. 13–19. One sigh and groan from a broken heart, is better pleasing to God, than all human eloquence. But,

[3.] *Thirdly*, I answer, *Beg of God to teach thee to pray.* Oh beg the Holy Spirit, that is a Spirit of prayer. God hath promised his Holy Spirit to them that ask it, Luke xi. 13. 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him!' Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them,' Ezek. xi. 19. 'And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh,' Zech. xii. 10. 'I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication.' Now gracious promises are God's bonds, and he loves to see his people put them in suit. God expects that we should be his remembrancers, and that we should pray over his promises, Isa. lxii. 6, 7; Isa. xlii. 25, 26. When he had promised great things to his people concerning justification, sanctification, and preservation, he subjoins, 'Yet, I will for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it,' Ezek. xxxvi. 37. God looks that we should spread his gracious promises before him, as Hezekiah did Sennacherib's letter, Isa. xxxvii. 14. God is never better pleased than when his people importune him in his own words, and urge him with arguments taken from his own promises. Though God be a very affectionate father, and a very liberal father, yet he is not a prodigal father, for he will never throw away his mercies on such as will not stoutly and humbly plead out his promises with him. God loves to take state upon him, and will be sought unto, both for his giving in of mercies, and for his making good of precious promises. Thou sayest thou canst not pray; why! canst thou not go into a corner, and spread the promises last cited before the Lord, and tell him how much it concerns his honour and glory, as well as thy own internal and eternal good, to make good those gracious promises that he hath made concerning his giving of his Spirit to them that ask him, and his putting his Spirit within them, and his pouring out a Spirit of grace and supplication upon them?

We read of Tamar, Gen. xxxviii. 18, 25, that when Judah her father-in-law lay with her, she took as a pledge his signet, bracelets, and staff;

and afterwards, when she was in great distress, and ready to be burnt as an harlot, she then brought out her staff, and signet, and bracelets, and said, 'By the man whose these are, am I with child,' and thereby she saved her life. The promises are as so many rich mines, they are as so many choice flowers of paradise, they are the food, life, and strength of the soul. They are as a staff to support the soul, and they are as a signet and bracelets to adorn the soul, and to enrich the soul; and therefore poor sinners should bring them forth, and lay them before the Lord, and urge God with them, there being no way on earth to save a man's soul, and to prevent a burning in hell like this. Concerning precious promises, let me give you these eight hints.

[1.] *First, That they are truly propounded and stated by God,* Mark x. 30.

[2.] *Secondly, That they shall certainly be performed,* 2 Cor. i. 20, they being all made in and through Christ. They are made first to Christ, and then to all that have union and communion with him.

Sirtorius, saith Plutarch, paid what he promised with fair words; but so doth not God. Men many times say and unsay; they often eat their words as soon as they have spoken them; but God will never eat the words that are gone out of his mouth: Isa. xlvi. 10, 11, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass: I have purposed it, I will also do it.'

[3.] *Thirdly, That they all issue from free grace, from special love, from divine goodness,* Hos. xiv. 4.

[4.] *Fourthly, That they are all as unchangeable as he is that made them,* Jer. xxxi. 3.

[5.] *Fifthly, That they are all bottomed and founded upon the truth, faithfulness, and all-sufficiency of God,* Mal. iii. 6.

[6.] *Sixthly, That they are pledges and pawns of great things that God will do for his people in time,* Heb. xiii. 5.

[7.] *Seventhly, That they are most sure and certain evidences of divine favour, and a declaration of the heart and good-will of God to his poor people,* Heb. vi. 12, Num. xxiii. 19.

[8.] *Eighthly, That they are the price of Christ's blood.*

Now how should all these things encourage poor souls to be still a-pressing of God with his promises. But,

[4.] *Fourthly, You say you cannot pray, &c. Oh that you would leave off objecting, and fall upon praying.* If you cannot pray as you would, nor as you should, pray as well as you can. Joseph's brethren stood so long dallying, and delaying, and trifling out the time, that, having a journey to go to buy corn, they might have bought and returned twice before they went and bought once. When Elijah called Elizeus, he goes about the bush, and he must needs go bid his father and mother farewell before he could follow the prophet, 1 Kings xix. 20. O friends! take heed of dallying, delaying, trifling, and going about the bush, when you should be a-falling upon the work of prayer. What though with Hannah thou canst but weep out a prayer, or with Moses stammer out a prayer, or with Hezekiah chatter out a prayer, yet do as well as thou canst, and thou shalt find acceptance with God: 2 Cor. viii. 12, 'For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.'

The publican's prayer had not much rhetoric or eloquence in it, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' Luke xviii. 13, and yet God accepted it. He prayed much, though he spake little, and God did not turn a deaf ear upon him. That God that once accepted a handful of meal for a sacrifice, and a gripe of goat's hair for an oblation, and the poor widow's two mites, as if they had been two millions, will certainly accept of what thou art able to do, though thou dost fall short, yea, much short, of what thou oughtest to do, Lev. ii. 1, 2, and vi. 15, Luke xxi. 3. 'Lord,' saith Luther, 'thou commandest me to pray. I cannot pray as I would, yet I will obey; for though my prayer be not acceptable, yet thine own commandment is acceptable to thee.' If weak Christians would but put forth in prayer that little strength they have, God would quickly renew their spiritual strength; he would certainly carry them on from strength to strength; he would still, by secret assistances and secret influences, help them on in their heavenly trade, Isa. xlix. 20–22, Ps. lxxxiv. 7. As a loving indulgent father will take his little child in his arms, and carry him on in his way homeward, when his strength begins to fail him, and he can walk no further, and the way proves dirty, slippery, or uneven, so doth God by his: Hos. xi. 3, 'I taught Ephraim also to go' (as a nurse doth the infant), 'taking them by their arm.' When God's poor children come to a foul way, or a rough place, he takes them up in his own arms, and helps them over the quagmire of crosses, and the difficulties of duties, and over all that straitness, and narrowness, and weakness of spirit that doth attend them in their closet performances.

It is observable, that when the king of Israel was to shoot the arrow, he did put his hand upon the bow, and Elisha did put his hand upon the king's hand, 2 Kings xiii. 16. So when we go into our closets, we are to put up our hand, and then the Spirit of God likewise will put his hand upon our hand, he will put his strength to our strength, or rather to our weakness: Rom. viii. 26, 'Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities,' lifts with us, or helpeth together. The Greek word *συναντιλαμβάνεται* doth properly signify such a help, as when another man of strength and ability steppeth in to sustain the burden that lieth upon our shoulders, be it a log, or a piece of timber, setting his shoulders under it, to lift up, and bear part of it with us, or to help us as the nurse helpeth her little child, upholding it by the sleeve. When a poor Christian sets himself to closet prayer, or to mourn, or to believe, or to obey, &c., then the Spirit comes in with new help, and new influences, and new assistances, and so carries him on in all these noble services. That child that doth but stammer at first, in time will speak plainly and fluently. Oh how many Christians are there that now can pray with much freedom, liberty, and fluency, who at first could only sigh out a prayer, or stammer out a prayer, or weep out a prayer! Thou sayest thou cannot pray, but didst thou but stir up thyself to obey that command, Mat. vi. 6, as well as thou canst, thou dost not know but that a power may go forth with the command, that may enable thee to act suitable to the command. In Mat. ix. 1–9, Christ bid the palsy man rise and walk: 'Take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.' The palsy man might have objected, 'Alas! I am carried by four, I am not able to stir a limb, much less to rise, but least of all to take up my bed and

walk, &c. Oh but he rouseth up himself as well as he could, and a power went forth with the command, that enabled him to do what was commanded. So Mat. xii. 10–14, there was a poor man that had a withered hand, and Christ commands him to stretch forth his hand; he might have replied, 'My hand is withered, and if I might have as many worlds as there be men in the world, to stretch it forth, I could not stretch it forth; yea, if my very life, if my very salvation did lie upon stretching forth my withered arm, I could not stretch it forth.' Oh! but he throws by all such pleas, and complies with Christ's command as well as he could, and a power went forth and healed his hand. O sirs! if you would but pray in your closets as well as you can, you do not know but that such a power and virtue might flow from Christ into your hearts, as might carry you on in your closet-duties, beyond expectation, even to admiration;[1] others have found it so, and why not you, why not you? Well! remember, that God is no curious nor critical observer of the incongruous expressions that falls from his poor children when they are in their closet-duties; he is such a Father as is very well pleased with the broken expressions and divine stammerings of his people when they are in a corner. It is not a flood of words, nor studied notions, nor seraphical expressions, nor elegant phrases in prayer, that takes the ear, or that delights the heart of God, or that opens the gates of glory, or that brings down the best of blessings upon the sonl; but uprightness, holiness, heavenliness, spiritualness, and brokenness of heart: these are the things that make a conquest upon God, and that turns most to the soul's account. But,

(5.) *Fifthly* Thou sayest thou canst not pray, *but if thou art a child of God, thou hast the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of God is a Spirit of prayer and supplication.* That all the children of God have the Spirit of God is most evident in the blessed Scriptures. Take these for a taste: Zech. xii. 10, 'I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication;' Ps. li. 11, 'Take not thy Holy Spirit from me;' Rom. viii. 15, 'Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father;' 1 Cor. ii. 12, 'We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God;' 1 Thes. iv. 8, 'Who hath given unto us his Holy Spirit;' 1 John iii. 4, 'Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us;' chap. iv. 13, 'Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.'

That all the children of God have the Spirit of God, may be further made evident by an induction of these seven particulars.

[1.] *First, They are all sanctified by the Spirit*: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'Ye are sanctified by the Spirit of our God.' I do not say, that they are all equally sanctified by the Spirit, but I say they are all really sanctified by the Spirit. Though all the servants of Christ have their talents, yet all have not their ten talents, nor all have not their five talents, nor all have not their two talents; some have only their one talent, Mat. xxv. 15. Though Benjamin's mess was five times as much as his brethren's mess, yet every one of his brethren had their mess, Gen. xliii. 32–34,

[1] 'Wonder.'—G.

so though some Christians have five times more measures of the Spirit, and more measures of light, of love, of holiness, of heavenly-mindedness, &c., than others have, yet every Christian hath some measures of the Spirit, and some measures of grace and holiness, &c. Though some are babes in Christ, and others are children in Christ, though some are young men in Christ, and others old men in Christ, yet every one of them is born of the Spirit of Christ, 1 Peter ii. 2; 1 John ii. 12–14; John iii. 8. Though none of the people of God in this life, have the Spirit in perfection, yet every one of them have so much of the Spirit as will bring him to salvation. Every Christian hath so much of the Spirit as will bring Christ and his soul together; and therefore without all peradventure, every Christian hath so much of the Spirit, as will at last bring heaven and his soul together.

[2.] *Secondly, They are all led by the Spirit:* Rom. viii. 14, 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.' Every child of God hath a twofold guide: the word without, and the Spirit within, Isa. xxx. 20, 21. How the Spirit leads by the rule of the word, and how he leads to God, and leads to Christ, and leads to truth, and leads to righteousness, and leads to holiness, and leads to happiness, I shall not now undertake to shew, Prov. vi. 22, Eph. v. 9.

[3.] *Thirdly, They are all upheld and strengthened by the Spirit:* Ps. li. 12, 'Uphold me with thy free Spirit;' or underprop me or sustain me, as the Hebrew hath it, with thy free, voluntary Spirit; or, as the Greek turns it, with thy noble, princely Spirit. So Eph. iii. 16, 'To be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.' By the inner man, some understand the regenerate part of man; others, by the inner man, do understand the soul with all its noble faculties and motions. Take the words which way you will, it is certain that all the spiritual might and strength that a Christian hath, he hath it from the Holy Spirit. Though the Spirit strengthens every Christian in the inner man, yet I do not say that the Spirit strengthens every Christian alike in the inward man. Some have stronger corruptions to subdue than others, and more violent temptations to withstand than others, and greater difficulties to wrestle with than others, and choicer mercies to improve than others, and higher and harder duties of religion to manage than others, and accordingly they are more strengthened in the inner man than others.

[4.] *Fourthly, They are all partakers of the first-fruits of the Spirit:* Rom. viii. 23, 'Ourselves have the first-fruits of the Spirit,' which are but as a handful of corn in respect of the whole crop. All the grace and all the holiness which we have from the regenerating Spirit at first conversion is but a drop to that sea, a mite to those talents, which we shall receive in the life to come, 2 Cor. i. 22.

[5.] *Fifthly, They are all taught by the Spirit,* John xiv. 26. 'The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things,' Isa. lix. 21.

This promise primarily belongs to the apostles;

Secondarily, to all believers.

Though these words were spoken at first to the apostles only, yet they were not spoken of the apostles only: Isa. liv. 13, 'And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of

thy children.' In these words there are three things promised to the apostles:

First, Immediate illumination by the Spirit of God.

Secondly, A full knowledge of all those truths belonging to their apostolical office, and that were necessary for them at that juncture of time.

Thirdly, Absolute infallibility as to matter of doctrine.

There are also three things promised to all believers:

First, Mediate illumination, teaching truths by the Spirit of truth, in the use of the means of grace.

Secondly, Knowledge of all truth necessary to salvation.

Thirdly, Infallibility too, so far forth as they adhere and keep close to the Spirit's teaching in the word.

Philo saith that the primitive Christians were called *tillers*, because, as husbandmen till their fields and manure their grounds, so did they teach their families and nurture their children and servants with good instructions.[1] Oh, what choice teachings of the Spirit were these primitive Christians under, who made it so much their business, their work, to teach those that were under their charge, 1 Thes. iv. 9, 2 Cor. iii. 8. So 1 John ii. 27, 'But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth.' Not that we know all things simply, or that we need not a ministry to teach and instruct us; but he speaks comparatively: you shall not be so helped by any instructions without the Spirit, as with the Spirit. The Spirit shall declare the truth as it is in Jesus more clearly, more freely, more particularly, more certainly, more universally, more effectually, than any other is able to do.[2] The Spirit, this holy unction, shall teach the saints all things; not all things knowable, for that is impossible for finite creatures to attain unto. Who knows the motions of the heavens, the influences of the stars, the nature of the creatures, or how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child? Who knows the reason why the river Nilus should overflow in the summer, when waters are at the lowest; or why the loadstone should draw iron to it, or incline to the pole star?

Pliny tells us of one that spent eight and fifty years in learning out the nature of the bee, and yet had not fully attained to it.[3] How is it possible, then, for the wisest naturalist to enter into the deep things of God?

Paul, that learned his divinity among the angels, and that had the Holy Ghost for his immediate teacher, tells us plainly that 'he knew but in part,' 1 Cor. xiii. 9–11; and oh then, how little a part of that part do we know! But the Spirit teacheth the saints all things; that is,

First, He teacheth them all things needful for the salvation of their souls, all things necessary to bring them to heaven, John xvii. 3.

Secondly, All things needful to life and godliness, 2 Peter i. 3.

Thirdly, All things needful to their places, callings, sexes, ages, and conditions.

[1] Cf. Works, by Yonge, vol. i. pp. 378, *seq.*—G.

[2] 1 Cor. vi. 9–11; 1 Tim. iv. 1; John xvi. 25; Isa. xlviii. 17; Eccles. xi. 5.

[3] [*Nat. Hist.*] Lib. xi. cap. ix. [viz., Aristomachus of Soli.—G.]

Fourthly, All things needful for you to know to preserve you in the truth, and to preserve you from being deluded and seduced by those false teachers of whom he speaks, 1 John ii. verses 10, 19, 22, 23, 26. And certainly this is the main thing that John hints at in that expression. The 'all things' spoken of in ver. 27, according to the ordinary Scripture style, must necessarily be interpreted only of all those things which are there spoken of. But,

[6.] Sixthly, *They are all comforted by the Spirit*:[1] Acts ix. 31, 'They walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost;' Rom. xiv. 17, 'For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;' 1 Thes. i. 6, 'And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.' Not that all Christians have always actual comfort, actual joy. Oh no! For as the air is sometimes clear and sometimes cloudy, and as the sea is sometimes ebbing and sometimes flowing; so the comforts and joys of the people of God are sometimes ebbing and sometimes flowing, sometimes clear and sometimes cloudy.

Hudson the martyr being deserted at the stake, went from under his chain; and having prayed earnestly, was comforted immediately, and suffered valiantly.[2]

So Mr Glover the martyr was deserted in prison, but as he was going to the stake he looked back, and cried out to his friend, 'He is come, he is come,' meaning the Comforter, and so he laid down his life with joy.[3]

Rachel wept, and would not be comforted; she gave so much way to weeping, that she would not give the least way to comfort; and so it is many times with the choicest saints, 'My soul refused to be comforted,' Ps. lxxvii. 2. It is not my purpose at present to insist on the several ways whereby the people of God refuse comfort, and fall short of those strong consolations which God is willing that they should receive. The sun may operate where it doth not shine, and a man may be in a state of salvation, and yet want consolation; a man may fear the Lord, and obey the voice of his servant, and yet walk in darkness and see no light, Isa. l. 10. There is no Christian but may sometimes have trouble in his conscience, and grief in his heart, and tears in his eyes, and fears and questionings in his soul, whether God be his Father, and whether Christ be his redeemer, and whether mercy belongs to him, yea, whether any promise in the book of God belongs to him? &c. Joy and comfort are those dainties, those sweetmeats of heaven, that God doth not every day feast his people with, Ps. xxx. 6, 7; every day is not a wedding day, nor every day is not a harvest day, nor every day is not a summer's day. The fatted calf is not killed every day, nor the robe and the ring is not every day put on; every day is not a festival day nor a dancing day, Luke xv. 22, 23; Eccles. iii. 4; Rom. xii. 15. As there is a time to sing, so there is a time to sigh; as there is a time to laugh, so there is a time to weep; and as there is a time to dance, so there is a time to mourn. All tears will never be clear wiped from our eyes till all sin be quite taken out of our hearts. But notwithstanding all this, yet gracious souls have always sure and choice grounds of consolation; they have the promises, they have the 'first-fruits of the

[1] John xiv. 16, 26, xv. 26, and xvi. 7. [2] Clarke, as before.—G. [3] Ibid.—G.

Spirit,' they have union with Christ, and they have right to eternal life, though they have not always sensible comforts. The children of God have always cause to exercise faith and hope on God in their darkest condition, though they have not always actual joy and consolation, Job xiii. 15, Ps. xlii. 5. The Comforter always abides with the saints, though he doth not always actually comfort the saints, John i. 16. The Spirit many times carries on his sanctifying work in the soul when he doth not carry on his comforting work in the soul; the Spirit many times acts in a way of humiliation when he doth not act in a way of consolation; the Spirit many times fills the soul with godly sorrow when he doth not fill the soul with holy joy. The actings of the Spirit, as to his comforting work, are all of his own sovereign will and pleasure; and therefore he may abide in the soul when he doth not actually comfort the soul. But,

[7.] *Seventhly, The people of God, first or last, are sealed by the Spirit:* Eph. i. 13, 'In whom, after ye believed, ye were sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise.'[1] The nature of sealing consists in the imparting of the image or character of the seal to the thing sealed. To seal a thing is to stamp the character of the seal on it. Now, the Spirit of God doth really and effectually communicate the image of God to us, which image consists in righteousness and true holiness. Then are we truly sealed by the Spirit of God when the Holy Ghost stamps the image of grace and holiness so obviously, so evidently upon the soul, as that the soul sees it, feels it, and can run and read it; then the soul is sealed by the Holy Spirit. So Eph. iv. 30, 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' The person of the Holy Ghost is here set forth in the Greek with a very great energy, such as our tongue is not able fully to express.

Here are three words, that have three articles, every word his several article by itself, τὸ πνευμα, τὸ ἅγιον, τοῦ θεοῦ, *the* Spirit, not a Spirit; and not holy, but *the* holy; nor of God, but of *that* God: 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.' In these scriptures you see that the Spirit is a seal. Now, a seal among men is,

First, For secresy.

Secondly, For distinction.

Thirdly, For authority.

Fourthly, For certainty. A writing sealed is authentic; and for ensuring.

In the three texts last cited, if you compare them together, you may observe these six things:

First, The person sealing, and that is, the *Father.*

Secondly, In whom, in *Christ.*

Thirdly, With what seal, the *Spirit of promise.* Where are all the persons in the Trinity making us sure of our inheritance.

Fourthly, When, *after ye believed.*

Fifthly, The end, which is twofold:

(1.) *Subordinate,* and that is the certainty of our salvation;

[1] These words, saith Zanchy [Zanchius], are a metaphor taken from merchants, who having bought goods, seal them as their own, and so transport them to other places Eph. iv. 24.

(2.) *Ultimate*, and that is, the praise of his glory.

Sixthly, The time, how long this seal and earnest shall assure us, and that is, 'till we have the complete possession of what it is an earnest.' To prevent mistakes and disputes about the sealings of the Spirit on the one hand, and to support, comfort, and encourage the poor people of God on the other hand, let me briefly hint at the Spirit's special sealing times.

[1.] *First, Conversion times are often the Spirit's sealing times*, Luke xv. 22, 23. Upon the prodigal's return, the fatted calf is killed, and the best robe is put upon his back, and the ring is put upon his hand, and shoes on his feet. Some by the robe understand the royalty of Adam, others, the righteousness of Christ. And by the ring, some understand the pledges of God's love, rings being given as pledges of love; and by the ring others understand the seal of God's Holy Spirit, men using the seal with their rings. Among the Romans the ring was an ensign of virtue, honour, and nobility, whereby they that wore them were distinguished from the common people. I think the main thing intended by the robe and the ring is, to shew us, that God sometimes upon the sinner's conversion and returning to him, is graciously pleased to give him some choice manifestations of his gracious pleasure and good-will, and to seal up to him his everlasting love and favour. And hence it comes to pass that some that are but babes in Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3; 1 John ii. 12–14, are so diligent and active in religious duties, and so conscientious and dexterous in the exercise of their graces. At first conversion, God helps some of his people to read their own names written in legible letters in the book of life, Acts ix. 3–6. No sooner are some converted, but the Spirit stamps his seal upon them.

[2.] *Secondly, Believing times are sealing times*, Eph. i. 13. When they were in the very exercise of their faith, when they were acting of their faith,—for so much the original imports,—the Spirit came and sealed them up to the day of redemption, Rom. xv. 13; 1 Pet. i. 8. He that honours Christ by frequent actings of faith on him, him will Christ honour, by setting his seal and mark upon him.

[3.] *Thirdly, Humbling times, mourning times, are sealing times.* When a holy man was asked, which were the joyfullest days, the comfortablest days, that ever he enjoyed, he answered, his mourning days. His mourning days were his joyfullest days; and therefore he cried out, 'Oh give me my mourning days, give me my mourning days; for they were my joyfullest days.' Those were days wherein God sealed up his everlasting love to his soul, Job xxii. 29; Isa. xxix. 19. When the prodigal had greatly humbled himself before his father, then the best robe and ring were put upon him, Luke xv. 17–24. There are none that long for the sealings of the Spirit like humble souls; nor none set so high a price upon the sealings of the Spirit, as humble souls; nor none make so choice an improvement of the sealings of the Spirit, as humble souls. And therefore when men's hearts are humble and low, the Spirit comes and sets the privy-seal of heaven upon them.

[4.] *Fourthly, Sin-killing, sin-mortifying, sin-subduing times, are the Spirit's sealing times;* Rev. ii. 17, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, that no man knows saving he that receiveth it.'

God will give to the victorious Christian a secret love-token, whereby his soul may rest assured of the unspeakable love of God, and of its freedom from condemnation. White stones were of very great use among the Romans, and among the Athenians, and served to acquit the accused in courts of justice. When malefactors were accused, arraigned, and condemned in their courts, they gave them a black stone in token of condemnation; but when they were acquitted, they gave them white stones, in token of absolution; and to this practice the Holy Ghost seems to allude. He that is victorious over his lusts shall have a new name, 'that is better than the names of sons and daughters,' Isa. lvi. 5; and he shall have the pardon of his sins writ in fair letters upon the white stone, so that he may run and read his absolution. The victorious Christian shall have assurance of the full discharge of all his sins, he shall have a clear evidence of his justification, and a blessed assurance of his eternal election; all which are hidden and mysterious things to all but those that have experienced and tasted what these sweet meats of heaven mean, 1 John i. 7.

Among the Romans there were solemn feasts held in honour of those that were victorious in their sacred games. Now those that were to be admitted to those feasts were wont to have their names written on white shells, and white stones, and by these tickets they were admitted. Now some think the Holy Ghost alludes to this practice, and so would hint to us a privy mark whereby victorious Christians may be known, and admitted as bidden guests to the heavenly banquet of the hidden manna, according to Rev. xix. 9. O sirs! when predominate lusts are brought under, when bosom-sins lie slain in the soul, then the Spirit comes and seals up love, and life, and glory to the soul.

[5.] *Fifthly, Suffering times are sealing times;* Acts vii. 55, 56, 59, 60; Rev. i. 9, 10; 2 Cor. iv. 15–17. The primitive Christians found them so, and the suffering saints in the Marian days found them so.[1] When the furnace is seven times hotter than ordinary, the Spirit of the Lord comes and seals up a man's pardon in his bosom, and his peace with God, and his title to heaven. When the world frowns most, then God smiles most; when the world puts their iron chains upon the saints' legs, then God puts his golden chains about the saints' necks; when the world puts a bitter cup into one hand, then the Lord puts a cup of consolation into the other hand; when the world cries out, 'Crucify them, crucify them!' then commonly they hear that sweet voice from heaven, 'These are my beloved ones, in whom I am well pleased.'

Blessed Bradford looked upon his sufferings as an evidence to him that he was in the right way to heaven. And saith Ignatius, 'It is better for me to be a martyr than to be a monarch.'

[6.] *Sixthly, Self-denying times are the Spirit's sealing times,* Mat. xix. 27–29.

First, There is sinful self, which takes in a man's lusts.

Secondly, There is natural self, which takes in a man's arts, parts, gifts, with reason.

Thirdly, There is religious self, which takes in all a man's religious duties and services, whether ordinary or extraordinary.

Fourthly, There is moral self, which includes a freedom from gross,

[1] Acts v. 40–42; Ps. lxxi. 20, 21; and Ps. xciv. 19; Rev. i. 9, 10.

heinous, enormous wickednesses, and a fair, sweet, harmless behaviour towards men.

Fifthly, There is relative self, which takes in our nearest and dearest relations in the flesh; as wife, children, father, mother, brothers, sisters, &c., Ps. xlv. 7–11. Now when a man comes thus universally to deny himself for Christ's sake, and the gospel's sake, and religion's sake, then the Spirit of the Lord comes and seals him up unto the day of redemption. This is a truth confirmed by the experiences of many martyrs now in heaven, and by the testimony of many Christians still alive.

[7.] *Seventhly, Sacrament times are sealing times.* In that 'feast of fat things,' God by his Spirit seals up his love to his people, and his covenant to his people, and pardon of sin to his people, and heaven and happiness to his people. There are many precious souls that have found Christ in this ordinance, and when they could not find him in other ordinances, though they have sought him sorrowingly. In this ordinance many a distressed soul hath been strengthened, comforted and sealed.

I might give you many instances. Take one for all. There was a gracious woman, who, after God had filled her soul with comfort, and sealed up his everlasting love to her, fell under former fears and trouble of spirit, and being at the Lord's supper, a little before the bread was administered to her, Satan seemed to appear to her, and told her that she should not presume to eat; but at that very nick of time, the Lord was pleased to bring into her mind that passage in the Canticles, 'Eat, O my friend,' Cant. v. 1. But notwithstanding this, Satan still continued terrifying of her, and when she had eaten, he told her that she should not drink; but then the Lord brought that second clause of the verse to her remembrance, 'Drink, yea drink abundantly' (or, 'be drunk,' as the Hebrew hath it) 'my beloved' (or, 'my loves,' as the Hebrew hath it;—all faithful souls are Christ's loves), and so she drank also, and presently was filled with such unspeakable joys, that she hardly knew how she got home; which soul-ravishing joys continued for a fortnight after, and filled her mouth with songs of praise, so that she could neither sleep nor eat, more than she forced herself to do out of conscience of duty. At the fortnight's end, when God was pleased to abate her measure of joy, she came to a settled peace of conscience, and assurance of the love of God; so that for twenty years after she had not so much as a cloud upon her spirit, or the least questioning of her interest in Christ. But,

[8.] *Eighthly, When God calls his people to some great and noble work, when he puts them upon some high services, some difficult duties, some holy and eminent employments, then his Spirit comes and sets his seal upon them*: Jer. i. 5, 'Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee: and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee to be a prophet unto the nations.' The Lord sending the prophet Jeremiah to denounce most dreadful judgments against a rebellious people, an impudent brazen-faced nation, he assures him of his eternal election, and of his choice presence, and singular assistance in that work that he set him about, verses 8th, 17th, 18th 19th. Thus the Lord dealt with Peter, James, and John, Mat. xvii. 1st to the 6th, and thus he dealt with Paul, Acts ix. 1st to 23d.

[9.] *Ninthly, When they are taken up into more than ordinary*

communion with God, then is the Spirit's sealing time. When was it that the spouse cried out, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his!' but when Christ brought her to his banqueting house, and his banner over her was love? Cant. ii. 16; 3–6, compared, &c.

[10.] *Tenthly* and lastly, *When Christians give themselves up to private prayer, when Christians are more than ordinarily exercised in secret prayer, in closet duties, then the Spirit comes and seals up the covenant and the love of the Father to them.* When Daniel had been wrestling and weeping, and weeping and wrestling all day long with God in his closet, then the angel tells him, 'that he was a man greatly beloved of God,' or a man of great desires, as the original hath it, Daniel ix. 20–23. There was a gracious woman who, after much frequenting of sermons, and walking in the ways of the Lord, fell into great desertions; but being in secret prayer, God came in with abundance of light and comfort, sealing up to her soul that part of his covenant, viz., 'I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh; that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God,' Ezek. xi. 19, 20. And thus I have given you a brief account of the Spirit's special sealing times. Now mark, this seal God sets upon all his wares, upon all his adopted children; for sooner or later there are none of his but are sealed with this seal. God sets his seal of regeneration, he stamps his image of holiness upon all his people, to difference and distinguish them from all profane, [im]moral,[1] and hypocritical persons in the world, John iii. 3; 2 Thes. ii. 13; Heb. xii. 14. Doubtless the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost, imprinting the draughts and lineaments of God's image of righteousness and holiness upon man, as a seal or signet doth leave an impression and stamp of its likeness upon the thing sealed, is the seal of the Spirit spoken of in Scripture: 2 Tim. ii. 19, 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.' But to prevent mistakes, you must remember, that though the Spirit of the Lord, first or last, will set his seal upon every real saint, yet the impression of that seal is not alike visible in all; for some bear this impression as babes, others as men grown up to some maturity. All God's adopted children bear this impression truly, but none of them bear it perfectly in this life. Sometimes this seal of regeneration, this seal of holiness is so plain and obvious that a man may run and read it in himself and others; and at other times it is so obscure and dark, that he can hardly discern it, either in himself or others. This seal is so lively stamped on some of God's people, that it discovers itself very visibly, eminently, gloriously; but on others it is not alike visible. And thus I have made it evident by these seven particulars, that all the children of God have the Spirit of God.

Now mark, the Spirit of God that is in all the saints, is a Spirit of prayer and supplication: Rom. viii. 15, 'Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.' While the child is in the womb it cannot cry, but as soon as it is born it cries. Whilst Paul did lie in the womb of his natural estate, he could not pray; but no sooner was he born of the Spirit, but the next news is, 'Behold he prayeth!'

[1] Qu. 'moral'; that is, merely moral, as distinguished from 'holy'?—ED.

Acts ix. 11. Prayer is nothing but the turning of a man's inside outward before the Lord. The very soul of prayer lies in the pouring out of a man's soul into the bosom of God. Prayer is nothing but the breathing that out before the Lord that was first breathed into us by the Spirit of the Lord. Prayer is nothing but a choice, a free, a sweet, and familiar intercourse of the soul with God. Certainly, it is a great work of the Spirit to help the saints to pray: Gal. iv. 6, 'Because you are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' God hath no still-born children. The gemination, 'Abba, Father,' notes fiducial, filial, and vehement affection. The first is an Hebrew or Syriac word, the second a Greek,[1] whereby is signified the union of the Hebrews and Grecians, or the Jews and Gentiles, in one church, 'Abba, Father.' What is Abba? say others in Hebrew, Father; and it is added, because in Christ the corner-stone both peoples are joined, alike becoming sons, whencesoever they come: circumcision from one place, whereupon *Abba;* uncircumcision from another, whereupon *Father* is named: the concord of the walls being the glory of the corner-stone.

The word Abba, say others, signifies father in the Syriac tongue, which the apostle here retaineth, because it is a word full of affection, which young children retain almost in all languages, when they begin to speak. And he adds the word father, not only to expound the same, but also the better to express the eager movings and the earnest and vehement desires and singular affections of believers, in their crying unto God; even as Christ himself redoubled the word Father, Mark xiv. 36, to the same purpose, when he was in his greatest distress. This little word Father, saith Luther, lisped forth in prayer by a child of God, exceeds the eloquence of Demosthenes, Cicero, and all other so famed orators in the world. It is certain that the Spirit of God helps the saints in all their communions with God, viz., in their meditations of God, in their reading and hearing of the word of God, in the communions one with another, and in all their solemn addresses to God. And as to this the apostle gives us a most special instance in that Rom. viii. 26, 'Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercessions for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.' When we are to pray, there is in us sometimes an infirmity of ignorance, so that we know not what to pray for, either in regard of the matter or the manner. And there is in us at other times an infirmity of pride and conceitedness, so that we cannot pray with that humility and lowliness of spirit as we should, spiritual pride having fly-blown our prayers. Sometimes there is in us an infirmity of deadness, dulness, drowsiness, &c., so that we cannot pray with that warmth, heat, life, spirit, and fervency, as we should, or as we would; and at other times there is in us an infirmity of unbelief and slavish fears, so that we cannot pray with that faith and holy boldness, as becomes children that draw near to a throne of grace, to a throne of mercy, &c. But now the Spirit helps these infirmities by way of instruction, prompting and teaching us what to pray for, and how we should spell our lesson; and by telling us as it were within, what we should say, and how we should

[1] Pareus [*in loco*, as before.—G.]

sigh and groan; and by rousing and quickening, and stirring of us up to prayer, and by his singular influence and choice assistance opening and enlarging our hearts in prayer; and by his tuning the strings of our affections, he prepares us and fits us for the work of supplication; and therefore every one that derides the spirit of prayer in the saints, saying These are the men and the women that pray by the Spirit! blaspheme against the Holy Spirit; it being a main work of the Spirit to teach the saints to pray and to help them in prayer. Now, all the saints having the Spirit, and the Spirit being a Spirit of prayer and supplication, there is no reason in the world why a saint should say, I would pray in secret, but I cannot pray, I cannot pour out my soul nor my complaint before the Lord in a corner.

(6.) *Sixthly and lastly,* Thou sayest thou canst not pray, thou hast not the gifts and parts which others have. *But thou canst manage thy callings, thy worldly business as well as others; and why then canst thou not pray as well as others?* Ah, friends! did you but love private prayer as well as you love the world, and delight in private prayer as much as you delight in the world, and were your hearts as much set upon closet-prayer as they are set upon the world, you would never say you could not pray, yea, you would as quickly pray as well as others. It is not so much from want of ability to pray in secret, that you don't pray in secret, as it is from want of a will, a heart to pray in secret, that you don't pray in secret. Jacob's love to Rachel, and Shechem's love to Dinah, carried them through the greatest difficulties, Gen. xxix. and xxxiv. Were men's affections but strongly set upon private prayer, they would quickly find abilities to pray. He that sets his affections upon a virgin, though he be not learned nor eloquent, will find words enough to let her know how his heart is taken with her. The application is easy. He in Seneca complained of a thorn in his foot, when his lungs was rotten. So many complain of want of ability to pray in their closets, when their hearts are rotten. Sirs! do but get better hearts, and then you will never say you can't pray. It is one of the saddest sights in all the world, to see men strongly parted and gifted for all worldly businesses, to cry out that they can't pray, that they have no ability to pour out their souls before the Lord in secret. You have sufficient parts and gifts to tell men of your sins, your wants, your dangers, your difficulties, your mercies, your deliverances, your duties, your crosses, your losses, your enjoyments, your friends, your foes; and why then are you not ashamed to complain of your want of parts and gifts, to tell those very things to God in a corner, which you can tell to men even upon the housetops? &c. But,

Obj. 4. Fourthly, Some may further object and say, *God is very well acquainted with all our wants, necessities, straits, trials; and there is no moving of him to bestow any favours upon us, which he doth not intend to bestow upon us, whether we pray in our closets or no; and therefore to what purpose do you press secret prayer so hard upon us?* &c.

To this objection I shall give these answers.

(1.) *First, That this objection lies as strong against family prayer*

and public prayer as it doth against private prayer. God knows all thy wants and necessities, all thy straits and trials, &c., and therefore what needest thou pray in thy family, what needest thou attend public prayers in the communion of saints? There is no wringing of any mercy out of the hands of heaven, which God doth not intend to bestow. This objection faces all kind of prayer, and fights against all kinds of prayer. But,

(2.) *Secondly,* I answer, *That private prayer is that piece of divine worship and adoration, it is a part of that homage which we owe to God upon the account of a divine command, as I have already proved.* Now, all objections must bow before the face of divine commands; as Joseph's brethren bowed before him, Gen. xlii. 6; or as king Ahasuerus his servants bowed before Haman, Esther iii. 2. Indeed, every objection that is formed up against a divine command, should fall before it, as Dagon fell before the ark, or as Goliah fell before David. He that casts off private prayer under any pretence whatsoever, he casts off the dominion of God, the authority of God, and this may be as much as a man's life and soul is worth. But,

(3.) *Thirdly,* I answer, *Though prayer be not the ground, the cause of obtaining favours and mercies from God, yet it is the means, it is the silver channel, it is the golden pipe, through which the Lord is pleased to convey to his people all temporal, spiritual, and eternal favours,*[1] Ezek. xxxvi. from the 26th to the 37th verse of that chapter. God promises to give them the cream, the choicest, the sweetest of all spiritual, eternal, and temporal blessings; but mark, verse 37th, 'I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.' Though God be very prompt and ready to bestow upon his people the best and the greatest of blessings, yet he will by prayer be sought unto for the actual enjoyment of them. He that hath no heart to pray for a mercy he needs, he hath no ground to believe that ever God will give him the mercy he needs. There is no receiving without asking, no finding without seeking, no opening without knocking. The threefold promise annexed to the threefold precept in Mat. vii. 7, should encourage all Christians to be instant, fervent, and constant in prayer. The proud beggar gets nothing of men, and the dumb sinner gets nothing of God. As there is no mercy too great for God to give, so there is no mercy too little for us to crave. Certainly that man hath little worth in him that thinks any mercy not worth a seeking. But,

(4.) *Fourthly* and lastly, I answer, *Every Christian should labour to enjoy his mercies in mercy; he should labour to have his blessings blessed unto him; he should labour to have 'the good will of him that dwelt in the bush,' with all he hath,* Gen. xxii. 17. Now this is an everlasting truth, a maxim to live and die with, that whatsoever mercy comes not in upon the wing of prayer is not given in mercy. Oh, how sweet is that mercy that comes flying in upon the wing of prayer! How sweet was that water to Samson which streamed to him in the channel of private prayer, Judges xv. 19; he called the name of it *En-hakkore,* the well of him that prayed. Samson prayed as for life, and that water that was handed to him was as sweet as life. Every mercy that is gathered by the hand of prayer is as sweet as the rose of

[1] Isa. lv. 6; James i. 5; Isa. lxii. 7; Ps. xxii. 24.

Sharon, Cant. ii. 1. But that mercy that comes not in at the door of prayer, comes not in at the right door; and that mercy that comes not in at the right door will do a man no good: such mercies will make themselves wings and fly from us, Prov. xxiii. 5. Every Christian should narrowly look that all his mercies are sanctified mercies. Now, every mercy is sanctified by the word and prayer, 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5. Prayer prepares and fits us for mercy, and mercy for us. It is prayer that gives us a right and holy use of all our mercies. Such mercies are but great miseries that come not in upon the wing of prayer. Prayerless men's mercies are all given in wrath; yea, their blessings are cursed unto them, Prov. iii. 33, Mal. ii. 2. Look, as every sacrifice was to be seasoned with salt, so every mercy is to be sanctified by prayer. Look, as gold sometimes is laid not only upon cloth and silks, but also upon silver itself, so prayer is that golden duty that must be laid not only upon all our natural and civil actions, as eating, drinking, buying, selling, &c., but also upon all our silver duties, upon all our most religious and spiritual performances, as hearing, reading, meditating, conference, church-fellowship, breaking of bread, &c.

Certainly prayer is very necessary to make every providence, and every ordinance, and every mercy to be a blessing to us. Every mercy that comes in upon the wing of private prayer is a double mercy; it is a great-bellied mercy; it is a mercy that hath many mercies in the womb of it. Happy is that Christian that can lay his hand upon every mercy that he enjoys, and say of them all as once Hannah said of her Samuel: 1 Sam. i. 27, 'For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him.' But,

Objection 5. *Fifthly*, Some may further object and say, *I would drive a private trade with God, I would exercise myself in secret prayer, but I want a convenient place to retire into; I want a private corner to unbosom my soul to my Father in, &c.*

To this objection I shall give these three short answers:

(1.) First, *I suppose this objection concerns but a few Christians in our days.* That God that hath given a Christ to believers doth commonly give them a convenient corner to enjoy private communion with himself in, Rom. viii. 32. Most Christians, I am afraid, do rather want a heart for private prayer, than a convenient place for private prayer. What men set their hearts upon, they will find time and place to effect it, whether it be good or whether it be evil, whether it concerns temporals or spirituals, whether it concerns this world or another world, this life or a better life. If most men would but get better hearts, they would quickly find or make convenient places for private prayer. He who hath an inflamed love to God will certainly find out a corner to enjoy secret communion with God. True lovers will find out corners to enjoy one another in. How many men are there that can easily find out private places for their dogs to lie in, and their swine to sleep in, and their horses to stand in, and their oxen to feed in, &c., who can't find out a private place to seek the face of God in! But did these men but love their God, or their souls, or private prayer, or eternity, as well or better than their beasts, they would not be such brutes but that they would quickly find out a hole, a corner, to wait upon the Lord in. But,

(2.) *Secondly*, I answer, *If a Christian be on the top of a house with Peter, he may pray there; or if he be walking in the field with Isaac, he may pray there; or if be on the mountain with Christ, he may pray there; or if he be behind the door with Paul, he may pray there; or if he be waiting at table with Nehemiah, he may secretly pray there; or if he be in a wood, he may pray there, as the primitive Christians in times of persecution did; or if he be behind a tree, he may pray there; or if he be by the sea side, he may pray there, as the apostles did.* It was a choice saying of Austin, 'Every saint is God's temple,' saith he, 'and he that carries his temple about him, may go to prayer when he pleaseth.' Some saints have never had so much of heaven brought down into their hearts, as when they have been with God in a corner. Oh the secret manifestations of divine love, the secret kisses, the secret embraces, the secret influences, the secret communion with God, that many a precious Christian hath had in the most solitary places: it may be behind the door, or behind the wall, or behind the hedge, or behind the arbour, or behind the tree, or behind the rock, or behind the bush, &c. But,

(3.) *Thirdly*, and lastly, *Didst thou never in thy unregenerate estate make use of all thy wits, and parts, and utmost endeavours, to find out convenient seasons, and secret corners, and solitary places to sin in, and to dishonour thy God in, and to undo thine own and others' souls in?* Yes! I remember with shame and blushing, that it was so with me when I was dead in trespasses and sins, and walked according to the course of this world, Eph. ii. 1–3. Oh, how much then doth it concern thee in thy renewed, sanctified, and raised estate, to make use of all thy wits, and parts, and utmost endeavours, to find out the fittest seasons, and the most secret corners, and solitary places thou canst, to honour thy God in, and to seek the welfare of thine own and others' souls in! Oh that men were but as serious, studious, and industrious, to find out convenient seasons, secret places to please and serve and glorify the Lord in, as they have been serious, studious, and industrious to find out convenient seasons, and secret places to displease and grieve the Spirit of the Lord in. But,

Obj. 6. *Sixthly*, and lastly, others may further object and say, *We would be often in private with God, we would give ourselves up to closet-prayer, but that we can no sooner shut our closet doors, but a multitude of infirmities, weaknesses, and vanities do face us, and rise up against us.* Our hearts being full of distempers and follies, and our bodies, say some, are under great indispositions; and our souls, say others, are under present indispositions; and how then can we seek the face of God in a corner? how can we wrestle with God in our closets? &c.

Now, to this objection I shall give these six answers.

(1.) *If these kinds of reasonings or arguings were sufficient to shut private prayer out of doors, where lives that man or woman, that husband or wife, that father or child, that master or servant, that would ever be found in the practice of that duty?*[1] Where is there a

[1] Ps. xl. 12; Ps. li. 5; Rom. vii. 15, 24; Ps. cxxx. 3; 1 Cor. iv. 4; 2 Chron. vi. 36; Philip. iii. 12.

person under heaven whose heart is not full of infirmities, weaknesses, follies, and vanities; and whose body and soul is not too often indisposed to closet duties? 1 Kings viii. 46, 'If they sin against thee, for there is no man that sinneth not, &c.;'[1] Eccles. vii. 20, 'For there is not a just man upon the earth that doth good and sinneth not;' Prov. xx. 9, 'Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?' Job xiv. 4, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.' Job ix. 30, 31, 'If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shall thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.' Job ix. 20, 'If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.' Ps. cxliii. 2, 'And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.' James iii. 2, 'For in many things we offend all.' 1 John i. 8, 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' Such that affirm that men may be fully perfect in this life, or without sin in this life, they do affirm that which is expressly contrary to the Scriptures last cited, and to the universal experience of all saints, who daily feel and lament over that body of sin and death that they bear about with them; yea, they do affirm that which is quite contrary to the very state or constitution of all the saints in this life. In every saint, 'the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit lusteth against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other, so that they cannot do the things that they would,' Gal. v. 17. In every good man there are two men, the old man and the new; the one must be daily put on, and the other daily put off, Eph. iv. 22–24. All saints have a law in their members rebelling against the law of their minds; so that the good that they would do, they do not; and the evil that they would not do, that they do, Rom. vii. 23, 25, comp. They have two contrary principles in them, from whence proceeds two manner of actions, motions, and inclinations, continually opposite one to another; hence it is that there is a continual combat in them, like the struggling of the twins in Rebekah's womb. An absolute perfection is peculiar to the triumphant state of God's elect in heaven: heaven is the only privileged place, where no unclean thing can enter in, Rev. xxiii. 21; that is the only place where neither sin nor Satan shall ever get footing. Such as dream of an absolute perfection in this life, do confound and jumble heaven and earth together; the state of the church militant, with the state of the church triumphant, which are certainly distinct both in time and place, and in order, measure, and concomitants, Heb. xii. 22, 23. This dangerous opinion of absolute perfection in this life, shakes the very foundation of religion, and overthrows the gospel of grace; it renders the satisfaction of Christ, and all his great transactions, null and void; it tells the world that there is no need of faith, of repentance, of ordinances, of watchfulness. They that say they have no sin, say they have no need of the blood of Christ to cleanse them from sin, 1 John i. 7. Such as say they have no sin, say they have no need of faith to rest upon Christ for imputed righteousness to justify their persons. Such as say they have no sin, say they have no need of Christ as king to subdue their lusts; nor as priest, to expiate offences; nor as prophet, to teach and instruct

[1] Grace in this life is like gold in the ore, full of mixture.

them ; nor as a Saviour, to save them from their sins, or from wrath to come, Mat. i. 21 ; 1 Thes. i. 10. They that have a perfect righteousness of their own, need not be beholden to Christ for his pure, perfect, spotless, matchless righteousness. Such as are without sin have no cause to repent of sin, nor yet to watch against sin. Such as are perfect cannot say, We are unprofitable servants. But are they indeed just? Then they must live by faith, Heb. ii. 4. Are they men, and not angels? Then they must repent, Acts xvii. 30, 'For now he commands men everywhere to repent.' Surely the best of men are but men at the best. Oh how bad those men must be, who make God himself a liar, 1 John i. 10. But if these men are absolutely perfect, how comes it to pass that they are afflicted and diseased as other men? How comes it to pass that they eat, and drink, and sleep, and buy, and sell, and die as other men? Are these things consistent with an absolute perfection? Surely no. An absolute perfection is not a step short of heaven; it is heaven on this side heaven; and they that would obtain it must step to heaven before they have it. But,

(2.) *Secondly, I answer, That this objection lies as strong against family-prayer, and against all other kind of prayer, as it doth against closet-prayer.* He that shall upon any grounds make this objection a great bug-bear to scare his soul from closet-prayer; he may upon the same ground make it a great bug-bear to scare his soul not only from all other kind of prayer, but from all other duties of religion also, whether private or public. The spirit of this objection fights against all religion at once; and therefore you should say to it, as Christ said to Peter, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' But.

(3.) *Thirdly, I answer, It is not the infirmities and weaknesses of a Christian which are seen, lamented, bewailed, and resisted, that can obstruct or hinder the efficacy and success of his prayers.*[1] Let me clear up this in a few instances. Jonah, you know, was a man full of sinful passions, and other weaknesses, &c., and yet his prayer was very prevalent with God: Jonah ii. 1, 2, 7, 10, compared. So Elias his prayers were exceeding prevalent with God; he could open and shut heaven at his pleasure; and yet subject to like passions as we are, James iii. 17. Elias was a man of extraordinary sanctity and holiness, a man that lived in heaven whilst he dwelt on earth; Enoch-like, he walked with God, and yet subject to like passions as we are, 1 Kings xix. 8; Romans xi. 2, 3. God did in an eminent way communicate to him his counsel and secrets; he lay in the bosom of the Father; and yet was a man subject to like passions as we are. He was a very powerful and prevalent prophet; his very name imports as much; *Eli-jah* signifies my strong God. In that 1 Kings xvii. 1, it is *Eli-jahu*, that is, the Lord he is my strong God; and yet subject to like passions as we are. He was a man much in fasting and prayer; he was an inferior mediator between God and his people; and yet subject to like passions as we are. Now because some from hence might object and say, No wonder if such a man as he was, could by his prayers open and shut heaven at his pleasure; but I am a poor, weak, low, sinful, and unworthy creature; I am full of infirmities, weaknesses, and passions; and shall my prayers ever find access to

[1] A spiritual infirmity is the sickness or indisposition of the soul, that arises from weakness of grace.

God, and acceptance with God, or gracious answers and returns from God? Now to obviate this objection, and to remove this discouragement out of the thoughts and hearts of poor sinners, the Holy Ghost addeth this clause, that he was not a god, nor an angel, but a man, and such a man as was not exempted from common infirmities; for he had his passions, frailties, and weaknesses as well as other saints; intimating to us, that infirmities in the meanest saints should no more prejudice the acceptance and success of their prayers with God, than they did in Elias himself. The word *passion* sometimes signifies, *first*, a motion of the sensual appetite, arising from the imagination of good or ill, with some commotion of the body; *secondly*, sometimes passions signify sinful infirmities, sinful perturbations of the mind; and *thirdly*, sometimes passion is taken more strictly for the especial affection of sinful anger and wrath, which Chrysostom calls *brevis dæmon*, a short devil. It makes a man speak he knows not what, as you may see in Jonah; and to do he knows not what, as you may see in Saul. Now in these two last senses Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and yet a man so potent with God, that by private prayer he could do even what he listed in the court of heaven. In that 1 Sam. chap. xxi., you may read of David's round lies, and of his other failings, infirmities, and unseemly carriages before Achish, king of Gath, and for which he was turned out of the king's presence, under the notion of a madman; and yet at that very time he prays, and prevails with God for favour, mercy, and deliverance: Ps. xxxiv. 4, 'I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me out of all my fear.' But when was this? Read the title of the psalm, and you shall find it: 'A psalm of David, who changed his behaviour before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed.' In that Num. xx. 10–12, Moses his infirmities are pointed out. *First*, You have there his immoderate anger. (2.) His speaking to the people, when he should have spoke to the rock, ver. 8. (3.) His smiting of it, when he should only have spoken to it with the rod in his hand; and smiting it twice, as in a pang of passion and impatiency. (4.) His distrusting of the Lord's word, ver. 12. (5.) His reviling of the people, when he should have convinced them, 'Hear, ye rebels.' (6.) He seems to be so offended at his commission, that he can hardly forbear murmuring: 'Must we bring water out of the rock?' Mark that word, 'must *we*.' Oh how is the meekest man in all the world transported into passion, and anger, and unbelief, and hurried into sad indecencies! Num. xii. 3; and yet there was not a man on earth whose prayers were so powerful and prevalent with God as Moses his were, Ps. cvi. 23, Exod. xxxii. 9–15, xxxiii. 11–17, xiv. 13–16, &c. So king Asa was a man full of infirmities and weaknesses; he relies on the king of Syria, and not on the Lord, 2 Chron. xvi. 7–13; he is very impatient, and under a great rage upon the seer's reproof. He imprisons the seer; he oppressed some of the people; or, as the Hebrew hath it, 'he crushed,' or he trampled upon some of the people at the same time; and being greatly diseased in his feet, he sought to the physicians and not to the Lord; and yet this man's prayer was wonderful prevalent with God, 2 Chron. xiv. 11–15. The saints' infirmities can never make void those gracious promises by which God stands engaged to hearken

to the prayers of his people, Ps. l. 15, Isa. xxx. 19, and lxv. 24. God's hearing of our prayers doth not depend upon sanctification, but upon Christ's intercession; not upon what we are in ourselves, but upon what we are in the Lord Jesus; both our persons and our prayers are acceptable in the beloved, Eph. i. 6, 1 Pet. ii. 5. When God hears our prayers, it is neither for our own sakes nor yet for our prayers' sake, but it is for his own sake, and his Son's sake, and his glory's sake, and his promise's sake, &c.

Certainly God will never cast off his people for their infirmities.

First, It is the glory of a man to pass by infirmities, Prov. xix. 11. Oh how much more, then, must it be the glory of God to pass by the infirmities of his people!

Secondly, Saints are children; and what father will cast off his children for their infirmities and weaknesses? Ps. ciii. 13, 14, 1 Cor. xii. 27.

Thirdly, Saints are members of Christ's body; and what man will cut off a member because of a scab or wart that is upon it? 'What man will cut off his nose,' saith Luther, 'because there is some filth in it?'

Fourthly, Saints are Christ's purchase; they are his possession, his inheritance.[1] Now what man is there that will cast away, or cast off his purchase, his possession, his inheritance, because of thorns, bushes, or briars that grow upon it?

Fifthly, Saints are in a marriage-covenant with God, Hos. ii. 19, 20. Now what husband is there that will cast off his wife for her failings and infirmities? So long as a man is in covenant with God, his infirmities can't cut him off from God's mercy and grace. Now it is certain a man may have very many infirmities upon him, and yet not break his covenant with God, for no sin breaks a man's covenant with God but such as unties the marriage knot. As in other marriages, every offence or infirmity doth not disannul the marriage union; it is only the breach of the marriage vow, viz. adultery, that unties the marriage knot; so here it is only those sins which breaks the covenant which unties the marriage knot between God and the soul: (1.) When men freely subject[2] to any lust as a new master; or, (2.) When men take another husband; and this men do, when they enter into a league with sin or the world, when they make a new covenant with hell and death, Isa. xxviii. 15, 18. Now from these mischiefs God secures his chosen ones. In a word, if God should cast off his people for their infirmities, then none of the sons or daughters of Adam could be saved: 'For there is not a just man upon the earth that doth good and sinneth not,' Eccles. vii. 20. Now if God will not cast off his people for their infirmities, then certainly he will not cast off the prayers of his people because of those invincible infirmities that hang upon them; and therefore our infirmities should not discourage us, or take us off from closet prayer, or from any other duties of religion. But,

(4.) *Fourthly*, I answer, *The more infirmities and weaknesses hang upon us, the more cause have we to keep close and constant to our closet-duties.*[3] If grace be weak, the omission of private prayer will make it weaker. Look, as he that will not eat will certainly grow

[1] Eph. i. 22, 23; 1 Cor. vi. 20, vii. 23; 1 Pet. i. 18–20.

[2] In our older writers *subject* is frequently used as an intransitive verb.—ED.

[3] The omission of good diet breeds diseases.

weaker and weaker, so he that will not pray in his closet will certainly grow weaker and weaker. If corruptions be strong, the neglect of private prayer will make them stronger. The more the remedy is neglected, the more the disease is strengthened. Whatsoever the distempers of a man's heart be, they will never be abated, but augmented, by the omission of private prayer. The more bodily infirmities hang upon us, the more need we have of the physician; and so the more sinful infirmities hang upon our souls, the more need we have of private prayer. All sinful omissions will make work for repentance, for hell, or for the physician of souls. Sinful omissions lead to sinful commissions, as you may see in the angels that fell from heaven to hell, and in Adam's fall in paradise.

Origen going to comfort and encourage a martyr that was to be tormented, was himself apprehended by the officers, and constrained either to offer to the idols, or to have his body abused by a blackamore that was ready for that purpose; of which hard choice, to save his life, he bowed unto the idol; but afterwards, making a sad confession of his foul fact, he said, 'That he went forth that morning before he had been with God in his closet;' and so peremptorily concludes, 'that his neglect of prayer was the cause of his falling into that great sin.'

The neglect of one day, of one duty, of one hour, would undo us for ever, if we had not an advocate with the Father, 1 John ii. 1, 2. Those years, those months, those weeks, those days, those hours that are not filled up with God, with Christ, with grace, with duty, will certainly be filled up with vanity and folly. All omissions of duty, will more and more unfit the soul for duty. A key thrown by, gathers rust; a pump not used, will be hardly got to go; and armour not used, will be hardly made bright, &c. Look, as sinful commissions will stab the soul; so sinful omissions will starve the soul. Such as live in the neglect of private prayer may well cry out, Isa. xxiv. 16, Job xvi. 8, 'Our leanness, our leanness!' And therefore away with all these pleas and reasonings about infirmities, and weaknesses, and indispositions, and address yourselves to closet prayer. But,

(5.) *Fifthly*, I answer, *It may be thy distemper and indisposition of body is not so great, but that thou canst buy, and sell, and get gain.*[1] Notwithstanding thy aching head, and thy shooting back, and thy pained sides, and thy feeble knees, yet thou canst, with Martha, cumber thyself about thy worldly affairs. In that Cant. v. 3, Christ calls upon his spouse to open the door, and let him in. But sin and shifting coming into the world together, see how poorly and unworthily she labours to shift Christ off: 'I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?' Rather than she will make no excuse for herself, she will make a silly excuse, a worthless excuse. She was past a child; and what a great business had it been for her to have risen to have let in such a guest, that brings everything with him that heart can wish or need require, Rev. iii. 17, 18. She was not grown so decrepid with old age, but that she was able to make herself ready; at least, she might easily have slipped on her morning-coat and stepped to the door without any danger of taking cold, or of being

[1] The body itself, if you set too high a price upon it, will make a cheap soul; and he is the most unhappy man whose outside is his best side.

wet to the skin, and so have let him in, who never comes empty-handed, Rev. xxii. 12; yea, who was now come full of the dew of divine blessings to enrich her; for so some sense those words, 'Mine head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.' Oh, the frivolous pretences, and idle excuses that even gracions persons are apt sometimes to take up to over-colour their neglect of duty!

But some may say, It may be the spouse of Christ was asleep. Oh no! for she saith, verse 2, 'I sleep, but my heart waketh.' She slept with open eyes, as the lion doth; she slept but half-sleep; though her outward man was drowsy, yet her inward man was wakeful; though the flesh took a nap, yet her spirit did not nod.

Oh! but it may be Christ made no noise, he gave no notice that he was at the door! O yes! he knocked, he knocked and bounced by the hammer of his word, and the hand of his Spirit; he knocked by outward corrections and inward admonitions; he knocked by providences, and he knocked by mercies. His importunity and vehemency for admission was very great.

Oh! but it may be he did but only knock, he should have called as well as knocked; for none but madmen would open their doors in the night, except they knew the voice of him that knocketh. Oh yes! he did not only knock, but called also.

Oh! but it may be she did not know his voice, and therefore she would not open. No chaste wife will at unseasonable hours arise and open her doors unto a stranger, especially in her husband's absence. Oh yes, she knew his voice: verse 2, 'It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh.' She was not so fast asleep, but that she knew the voice of her beloved from all other voices, and could tell every tittle that he said.' The calls of Christ were so strong, so loud, and his pulsations so mighty, that she could not but know and confess, that it was the voice of her beloved, though she was not so respectful and dutiful as to obey that voice.

Oh! but it may be Christ knocked and called, like a friend in his journey, only to inquire how it was with her, or to speak to her at the window. Oh no! he speaks plainly, he speaks with authority, 'Open to me.'

Oh! but it may be she had no power to open the door. Oh yes; for when he commands his people to open, he lends them a key to open the door, that he may enter in, Philip. i. 6, 13; 1 Cor. xv. 10. Infused grace is a living principle that will enable the soul to open to Christ. If a man be not a free agent to work and act by the helps of grace received, to what purpose are counsels, commands, exhortations and directions, given to perform this, and that, and the other work? And certainly it is our greatest honour and happiness in this world to co-operate with God in those things which concern his own glory, and our own internal and eternal good.

Oh! but it may be Christ had given his spouse some distaste, or it may be he had let fall some hard words, or some unkind speeches, which made her a little froward and pettish. Oh no! for he owns her as his beloved, and courts her highly, with the most winning and amicable terms of love: 'My sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled, or my perfect one.' He calls her so for her dovelike simplicity, purity, and integrity. All these endearing and honouring titles, are the rhetoric of divine

love; and should have been as so many sacred engagements upon her, to open to her beloved.

Oh! but it may be Christ was too quick for her, it may be he gave but a knock and a call, and was gone before she could rise and open the door. O no! Christ stayed till his head was filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night; which most passionate expression notes the tender goodness, patience, and gentleness of our Lord Jesus, who endures far greater and harder things for his spouse's sake, than ever Jacob did for his Rachel's sake. After Christ had suffered much for her sake, and waited her leisure a long while, she very unkindly, and very unmannerly, and unworthily turns her back upon all his sweet and comfortable compellations, and blessed and bleeding embracements, and turns him off to look [for] his lodging in some other place; so that he might well have said, Is this thy kindness to thy friend, thy husband, thy Lord, to suffer him to stand bareheaded, and that in foul weather, yea, in the night time, wooing, entreating, and beseeching admittance; and yet to turn him off as one in whom thy soul could take no pleasure?

Now, if you will but seriously weigh all these circumstances in the balance of the sanctuary, you may run and read the fault and folly, the weakness and madness, the slightness and laziness of the spouse; and by her you may make a judgment of those sad and sinful distempers that may seize upon the best of saints, and see how ready the flesh is to frame excuses; and all to keep the soul off from duty, and the doors fast bolted against the Lord Jesus.

It is sad when men are well enough to sit, and chat, and trade in their shops, but are not well enough to pray in their closets. Certainly, that man's heart is not right with God, at least at this time, who, under all his bodily distempers, can maintain and keep up his public trade with men, but is not well enough to maintain his private trade with heaven. Our bodies are but dirt, handsomely tempered, and artificially formed; we derive our pedigree from the dirt, and are akin to clay. One calls the body 'the blot of nature;' another calls it the 'the soul's beast,' 'a sack of dung,' 'worms' meat;' another calls it 'a prison, 'a sepulchre;' and Paul calls it 'a body of vileness.' Now for a man to make so much ado about the distempers of his body to excuse the neglects of his soul, is an evil made up of many evils. But really, sir, I am so ill, and my body is so distempered and indisposed, that I am not able to mind or meddle with the least things of the world! Well! if this be so, then know that God hath on purpose knocked thee off from the things of this world, that thou mayest look the more effectually after the things of another world. The design of God in all the distempers that are upon thy body, is to wind thee more off from thy worldly trade, and to work thee to follow thine heavenly trade more close. Many a man had never found the way to his closet, if God by bodily distempers had not turned him out of his shop, his trade, his business, his all, &c.

Well, Christians! remember this once for all, if your indisposition to closet prayer doth really arise from bodily distempers, then you may be confident that the Lord will pity you much, and bear with you much, and kindly accept of a little. You know how affectionately parents and ingenuous masters do carry it towards their children and servants, when they are under bodily distempers and indisposition; and you may be

confident that God will never carry it worse towards you than they do towards them. Ponder often upon that Ezek. xxxiv. 4, 16, 21, 22. But,

(6.) *Sixthly*, and lastly, I shall answer this objection by way of distinction, thus:

First, There is a contracted indisposition to private prayer, and there is an involuntary indisposition to private prayer. There is a contracted indisposition, and that is when a man, by his wilful sinning against light, knowledge, conviction, &c., contracts that guilt that lies as a load upon his conscience. Now guilt makes the soul shy of God; and the greater the guilt is, the more shy the soul is of drawing near to God in a corner. The child that is sensibly under guilt hides himself, as Adam did, in the day from his father's eye, and at night he slips to bed, to avoid either a chiding or a whipping from his father, Gen. iii. 7, 8. Guilt makes a man fly from God, and fly from prayer. It is a hard thing to look God in the face, when guilt stares a man in the face, Job xi. 14, 15. Guilt makes a man a terror to himself, Jer. xx. 3, 4; now when a man is a terror to himself, he is neither fit to live, nor fit to die, nor fit to pray. When poison gets into the body, it works upon the spirits, and it weakens the spirits, and it endangers life, and unfits and indisposes a man to all natural actions. It is so here; when guilt lies heavy upon the conscience, it works upon the soul, it weakens the soul, it endangers the soul, and it doth wonderfully unfit and indispose the soul to all holy actions. Guilt fights against our souls, our consciences, our comforts, our duties, yea, and our very graces also, 1 Peter ii. 11. There is nothing that wounds and lames our graces like guilt; there is nothing that weakens and wastes our graces like guilt; there is nothing that hinders the activity of our graces like guilt; nor there is nothing that clouds our evidences of grace like guilt. Look, what water is to the fire, that our sinnings are to our graces, evidences, and duties. Guilt is like Prometheus's vulture, that ever lies gnawing. It is better with Evagrius to lie on a bed of straw with a good conscience, than to lie on a bed of down with a guilty conscience. What the probationer-disciple said to our Saviour,—Mat. viii. 19, 'Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest,'—that a guilty conscience saith to the sinner, 'Whithersoever thou goest I will follow thee.' If thou goest to a fast, I will follow thee, and fill thy mind with black and dismal apprehensions of God; if thou goest to a feast, I will follow thee, and shew thee the handwriting on the wall, Dan. v. 5; if thou goest abroad, I will follow thee, and make thee afraid of every leaf that wags; thou shalt look upon every bush as an armed man, and upon every man as a devil; if thou stayest at home, I will follow thee from room to room, and fill thee with horror and terror; if thou liest down to rest, I will follow thee with fearful dreams and tormenting apparitions; if thou goest into thy closet, I will follow thee, and make thy very closet a hell to hold thee.

It is storied of king Richard the Third, that after he had murdered his two nephews in the Tower, guilt lay so hard upon his conscience, that his sleeps were very unquiet; for he would often leap out of his bed in the dark, and catching his sword in his hand, which hung by his bed side, he would go distractedly about his chamber seeking for the traitor.

So Charles the Ninth of France, after he had made the streets of

Paris run down with the blood of the Protestants, he could seldom take any sound sleep, nor could he endure to be awakened out of his sleep without music.[1]

Judge Morgan, that passed the sentence of condemnation upon Jane Grey, a virtuous lady, shortly after fell mad, and in his raving cried out continually, 'Take away the Lady Jane from me, take away the Lady Jane from me,' and in that horror ended his wretched life.

James Abyes, going to execution for Christ's sake, as he went along, he gave his money and his clothes to one and another, till he had given all away to his shirt, whereupon one of the sheriff's men fell a-scoffing and deriding of him, and told him that he was a madman and an heretic, and not to be believed; but as soon as the good man was executed, this wretch was struck mad, and threw away his clothes, and cried out that 'James Abyes was a good man, and gone to heaven, but he was a wicked man, and was damned,' and thus he continued crying out till his death.[2] Certainly he that derides or smites a man for walking according to the word of the Lord, the Lord will, first or last, so smite and wound that man's conscience, that all the physicians in the world shall not heal it.

Now if thy indisposition to private prayer springs from contracting guilt upon thy conscience, then thy best way is speedily to renew thy repentance, and greatly to judge and humble thine own soul, and so to act faith afresh upon the blood of Christ, both for pardoning mercy and for purging grace. When a man is stung with guilt, it is his highest wisdom in the world to look up to the brazen serpent, and not to spend his time or create torments to his own soul by perpetual poring upon his guilt. When guilt upon the conscience works a man to water the earth with tears, and to make heaven ring with his groans, then it works kindly. When the sense of guilt drives a man to God, to duty, to the throne of grace, then it will not be long night with that man. He that thinks to shift off private prayer under the pretence of guilt, doth but in that increase his own guilt. Neglect of duty will never get guilt off the conscience.

But then there is an involuntary indisposition to private prayer; as in a sick man, who would work and walk, but cannot, being hindered by his disease; or as it is with a man that hath a great chain on his leg, he would very fain walk or get away, but his chain hinders him. Now if your indisposition to private prayer be an involuntary indisposition, then God will in mercy, in course, both pardon it and remove it.

Secondly, There is a total indisposition to private prayer, and there is a partial indisposition to private prayer. A total indisposition to private prayer is, when a man hath no mind at all to private prayer, nor no will at all to private prayer, nor no love at all to private prayer, nor no delight, nor no heart at all to private prayer, Jer. iv. 22, and xliv. 17–19. Now where this frame of heart is, there all is naught, very naught, stark naught. A partial indisposition to private prayer is, when a man hath some will to private prayer, though not such a will as once he had; and some mind to private prayer, though not such a mind as once he had; and some affections to private prayer, though not such warm and burning affections as once he had. Now if

[1] Thuanus, lib. lvii. Cf. Sibbes, vol. i. p. 149.—G. [2] Clarke, as before, p. 457.—G.

your indisposition to private prayer be total, then you must wait upon the Lord in all his appointments for a changed nature, and for union with Christ; but if your indisposition to private prayer be only partial, then the Lord will certainly pardon it, and in the very use of holy means in time remove it. But,

Thirdly, and lastly, *There is a transient, accidental, occasional, or fleeting indisposition to private prayer; and there is a customary, a constant, or permanent indisposition to private prayer.* Now a transient, accidental, occasional, or fleeting indisposition to that which is good may be found upon the best of saints, as you may see in Moses, Exod. iv. 10–14; and in Jeremiah, Jer. i. 5–8, 17–19, and xx. 9; and in Jonah, chap. i.; and in David, Ps. xxxix. 2, 3. Now if this be the indisposition that thou art under, then thou mayest be confident that it will certainly work off by degrees, as theirs did that I have last cited, Isa. lxv. 2. But then there is a customary, a constant or permanent indisposition to private prayer, and to all other holy duties of religion. Now if this be the indisposition that thou art under, then I may safely conclude that thou art in the very gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, Acts viii. 21–23, and thy work lies not in complaining of thy indisposition, but in repenting and believing, and in labouring for a change of thy heart and state; for till thy heart, thy state be changed, thou wilt remain for ever indisposed both to closet prayer and to all other duties of religion and godliness. To see a sinner sailing hell-ward with wind and tide on his side, to alter his course, and tack about for heaven, to see the earthly man become heavenly, the carnal man become spiritual, the proud man become humble, the vain man become serious, to see a sinner move contrary to himself in the ways of Christ and holiness, is as strange as to see the earth fly upward, or the bowl run contrary to its own bias; and yet a divine power of God upon the soul can effect it; and this must be effected before the sinner will be graciously inclined and sincerely disposed to closet prayer. And let thus much suffice by way of answer to this objection also.

Now, for the better management of this great duty, viz., closet prayer, I beseech you take my advice and counsel in these eleven following particulars.

(1.) *First, Be frequent in closet prayer, and not now and then only.* He will never make any yearnings of closet prayer, that is not frequent in closet prayer. Now, that this counsel may stick, consider,

[1.] *First, Other eminent servants of the Lord have been frequent in this blessed work:* Neh. i. 6, 'Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee, day and night.' So Daniel, he kneeled upon his knees three times a-day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did before-time, Dan. vi. 10. So David, 'My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, and in the evening will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up,' Ps. v. 3. So. Ps. lxxxviii. 13, 'But unto thee have I cried, O Lord; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.' So. Ps. cxix. 147, 'I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried unto the Lord.' So Ps. lv. 17, 'Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud.' Yea, he was *vir orationis* for his frequency in it. Ps. cix. 4, 'For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself

unto prayer;' or, as the Hebrew may be read, 'But I am a man of prayer.'

Of Carolus Magnus it was said, *Carolus plus cum Deo quam hominibus loquitur*, that he spake more with God than with men.

[2.] *Secondly, Consider the blessed Scripture doth not only enjoin this duty, but it requires frequency in it also,* Luke xviii. 1; 1 Thes. v. 17; Col. iv. 2. In the former part of this discourse, I have given light into these scriptures; and therefore the bare citing of them must now suffice.

[3.] *Thirdly, Christ was frequent in private prayer, as you may easily see by comparing of these scriptures together,* Mark i. 35; Mat. xiv. 23; Luke xxii. 39; John xviii. 2. In my second argument for private prayer you may see these scriptures opened and amplified. But,

[4.] *Fourthly, Consider that you have the examples of the very worst of men in this case.* Papists are frequent in their private devotions. And the Mahomedans, what occasion soever they have, either by profit or pleasure, to divert them, will yet pray five times every day. Yea, the very heathens sacrificed to Hercules morning and evening upon the great altar at Rome. Now, shall blind nature do more than grace? But,

[5.] *Fifthly, Consider you cannot have too frequent communion with God, you cannot have too frequent intercourse with Jesus, you cannot have your hearts too frequently filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and with that peace that passes understanding, you cannot have heaven too frequently brought down into your hearts, nor you cannot have your hearts too frequently carried up to heaven;* and therefore you cannot be too frequent in closet prayer. But,

[6.] *Sixthly, Consider that you are under frequent wants, and frequent sins, and frequent snares, and frequent temptations, and frequent allurements, and frequent trials, and frequent cares, and frequent fears, and frequent favours,* 1 Peter v. 8, Job i. 7; and therefore you had need be frequent with God in your closets. But,

[7.] *Seventhly, Consider you are the favourites of heaven, you are greatly beloved, you are highly honoured, you are exceedingly esteemed and valued in the court of the Most High;* and remember, that the petitions of many weak Christians, and of many benighted Christians, and of many tempted Christians, and of many clouded Christians, and of many staggering Christians, and of many doubting Christians, and of many bewildered Christians, and of many fainting Christians, &c., are put into your hands, for a quick and speedy despatch to the throne of grace; so that you had need be frequent in your closets, and improve your interest in heaven, or else many of these poor hearts may be wronged, betrayed, and prejudiced by your neglect. Such as are favourites in princes' courts, if they are active, diligent, careful, and watchful, they may do much good for others, they may come as often as they please into their prince's presence, and with Queen Esther have for asking what they please, both for themselves and others, Esther vii. Oh what a world of good may such do for others that are God's favourites, if they would be but frequent with God in their closets!

O sirs! if you have not that love, that regard, that pity, that compassion to your own souls, as you should have, yet, oh let not others

suffer by your neglect of private prayer! Oh, let not Zion suffer! Oh, let not any particular saint suffer by your being found seldom in your closets.

Certainly, it might have gone better with the churches of Christ, and with the concernments of Christ, and with many of the poor people of Christ, if most Christians had been more frequent with God in their closets. But,

[8.] *Eighthly and lastly, Consider that this liberty to approach nigh to God in your closets, cost Christ his dearest blood,* Eph. ii. 13, Heb. x. 20.[1] Now, he that is not frequent with God in his closet, tells all about him, that he sets no great value upon that liberty that Christ hath purchased with his blood. The incomparable, the unparalleled price which Christ hath paid down upon the nail, above sixteen hundred years ago, that we might have liberty and free access to his Father in our closets, argues very strongly, yea, irrefragably, the superlative excellency of that liberty, 1 Peter i. 19. Oh therefore let us improve to purpose this blessed purchase of our Lord Jesus, by being frequent with God in our closets. It is disputed by some whether one drop of Christ's blood was sufficient for the pardon of our sins and redemption of our souls.[2] My intention is not to dispute, but to offer a few things to your consideration.

First, It must be granted, that by reason of the hypostatical union, a drop of Christ's blood was of an inestimable worth and excellency; and the value of his passion is to be measured by the dignity of his person. But,

Secondly, A proportion was to be observed betwixt the punishment due to men, and that which was suffered for man; that his sufferings might be satisfactory, two things were necessary, *Pœnæ gravitas,* as well as *personæ dignitas.*[3] That the least drop of Christ's blood was not sufficient for the redemption of our souls may thus appear:

First, If it were, then the circumcision of Christ was enough, for there was a drop, if not many drops of blood shed.

Secondly, Then his being crowned with a crown of thorns, was sufficient; for it is most probable that they drew blood from him.

Thirdly, Then all Christ's sufferings besides were superfluous and vain.

Fourthly, Then God was unjust and unrighteous to take more than was due to his justice. But for any man to affirm that God hath taken beyond what was his just due, is high blasphemy.

Fifthly, Then Christ was weak and imprudent to pay more than he needed; for what need was there of his dearest heart blood, if a drop from his hand would have saved our souls? Let schoolmen fancy what they please, it is certain, that not one dram of that bitter cup that Christ drunk off could be abated, in order to his Father's full satisfaction, and man's eternal redemption. Christ hath given under his own hand that it was necessary that he should suffer many things, Luke xxiv. 26. O sirs! shall Christ shed not only a few drops of blood, but

[1] *Sanguis Christi clavis cœli.*

[2] One little drop of Christ's blood is more worth than heaven and earth.—*Luther.*

[3] What is the blood of a grape, or the blood of a son, an only son, to the blood of a Saviour?

his very heart blood, to purchase you a freedom and liberty to be as often in your closets with his Father as you please; and will you only now and then give God a visit in private? The Lord forbid.

(2.) My second advice and counsel is this, *Take the fittest seasons and opportunities that possibly you can for closet prayer.* Many take unfit seasons for private prayer, which do more obstruct the importunity of the soul in prayer, than all the suggestions and instigations of Satan. As,

First, When the body is drowsy and sleepy; this is a very unfit season for closet prayer, Cant. iii. 1. Take heed of laying cushions of sloth under your knees, or pillows of idleness under your elbows, or of mixing nods with your petitions, or of being drowsily devoted when you draw near to God in your closets.

Secondly, When a man's head and heart is filled with worldly cares and distractions; this is a very unfit season for closet-prayer, 1 Cor. vii. 35, Ezek. xxxiii. 31.

When Dinah must needs be gadding abroad to see fashions, Shechem, prince of that country, meets with her, and forces her virginity. So when our hearts, Dinah-like, must needs be a-roving and gadding abroad after the things of the world, then Satan, the prince of the air, usually seizes upon us, commits a rape upon our souls, and either leads us off from prayer, or else he doth so distract us from prayer, that it were better not to have prayed at all, than to have offered the sacrifice of foolish and distracted prayer.

I have read a story, how that one offered to give his horse to his fellow, upon condition he would but say the Lord's prayer, and think upon nothing but God; the proffer was accepted, and he began, 'Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.' But I must have the bridle too, said he. 'No, nor the horse neither,' said the other, for thou hast lost both already. The application is easy.

Certainly, the most free and lively season for closet-prayer is the mornings, before a man's spirit be blunted or cooled, deadened, damped, or flatted by worldly businesses. A man should speak with God in his closet, before he speaks with his worldly affairs and occasions. A man should say to all his worldly business, as Abraham said unto his young men, when he went to offer up his only Isaac, 'Abide you here, and I will go yonder and worship, and then return to you again.' He that will attend closet prayer without distraction or disturbance, must not, first, slip out of the world into his closet, but he must first slip into his closet before he be compassed about with a crowd of worldly employments.

It was a precept of Pythagoras, that when we enter into the temple to worship God, we must not so much as speak or think of any worldly business, lest we make God's service an idle, perfunctory, and lazy recreation. The same I may say of closet-prayer.

Jerome complains very much of his distractions, dulness, and indisposedness to prayer, and chides himself thus, 'What! dost thou think, that Jonah prayed thus when he was in the whale's belly; or Daniel when he was among the lions; or the thief when he was upon the cross?'

Thirdly, When men or women are under rash and passionate dis-

tempers, 1 Tim. ii. 8; for when passions are up, holy affections are down, and this is a very unfit season for closet-prayer; for such prayers will never reach God's ear which do not first warm our own hearts. In the Muscovy churches, if the minister mistake in reading, or stammer in pronouncing his words, or speak any word that is not well heard, the hearers do very much blame him, and are ready to take the book from him, as unworthy to read therein. And certainly God is no less offended with the giddy, rash, passionate, precipitate, and inconsiderate prayers of those who, without a deliberate understanding, do send their petitions to heaven in post-haste. Solomon's advice is worthy of all commendation and acceptation: 'Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty, to utter any thing before God,' Eccles. v. 2.; or as the Hebrew may be read, 'Let not thy heart through haste be so troubled or disturbed, as to tumble over, and throw out words without wisdom or premeditation.' Good men are apt many times to be too hasty, rash, and unadvised in their prayers, complaints, and deprecations. Witness David, Job, Jeremiah, Jonah, and the disciples.[1] No Christian to him that doth wisely and seriously weigh over his prayers and praises before he pours out his soul before the Lord. He never repents of his requests, who first duly deliberates what to request; but he that blurts out whatsoever lies uppermost, and that brings into the presence of God his rash, raw, tumultuary, and indigested petitions, confessions, complaints, &c., he doth but provoke God, he doth but brawl with God, instead of praying to him or wrestling with him. Suitors at court observe their fittest times and seasons of begging; they commonly take that very nick of time, when they have the king in a good mood, and so seldom or never come off but with good success.

Sometimes God strongly inclines the heart to closet-prayer; sometimes he brings the heart beforehand into a praying frame; sometimes both body and soul are more enlivened, quickened, raised, and divinely inflamed than at other times; sometimes conscience is more stirring, working, and tender, &c. Oh now strike while the iron is hot! Oh now lay hold on all such blessed opportunities, by applying of thyself to private prayer. O sirs! can you take your fittest times, seasons, and opportunities for ploughing, and sowing, and reaping, and buying and selling, and eating, and drinking, and marrying, &c. And cannot you as well take your fittest times and seasons to seek the Lord in your closets? Must the best God be put off with the least and worst of your time? The Lord forbid. Neglect not the seasons of grace, slip not your opportunities for closet-prayer; thousands have lost their seasons and their souls together.

(3.) My *third* advice and counsel is this, *Be marvellous careful that you do not perform closet duties merely to still your consciences.* You must perform them out of conscience, but you must not perform them only to quiet conscience. Some have such a light set up in their understandings, that they cannot omit closet-prayer, but conscience is upon their backs, conscience is still upbraiding and disquieting of them, and therefore they are afraid to neglect closet-prayer, lest conscience should

[1] Ps. xxxi. 2, 3; Ps. cxvi. 11; Job x. 1–3; Jer. xviii. 15, 18; Jonah iv. 2–4; Mat. xx. 20, 21.

question, arraign, and condemn them for their neglects.[1] Sometimes when men have greatly sinned against the Lord, conscience becomes impatient, and is still accusing, condemning, and terrifying of them; and now in these agonies they will run to their closets, and cry, and pray, and mourn, and confess, and bitterly bewail their transgressions, but all this is only to quiet their consciences; and sometimes they find upon their performance of closet-duties, that their consciences are a little allayed and quieted; and for this very end and purpose do they take up closet-prayer as a charm to allay their consciences; and when the storm is over, and their consciences quieted, then they lay aside closet-prayer,—as the monk did the net when the fish was caught,—and are ready to transgress again. O sirs! take heed of this, for this is but plain hypocrisy, and will be bitterness in the end. He that performs closet-prayer only to bribe his conscience that it may not be clamorous, or to stop the mouth of conscience that it may not accuse him for sin, he will at length venture upon such a trade, such a course of sinning againt conscience, as will certainly turn his troubled conscience into a seared conscience, 2 Tim. iv. 2; and a seared conscience is like a sleepy lion, when he awakes he roars, and tears his prey in pieces; and so will a seared conscience, when it is awakened, roar and tear the secure sinner in pieces.

When Dionysius's conscience was awakened, he was so troubled with fear and horror of conscience that, not daring to trust his best friends with a razor, he used to singe his beard with burning coals, as Cicero reports. All the mercy that a seared, a benumbed conscience doth afford the sinner, when it doth most befriend him, when it deals most seemingly kind with him, is this, that it will not cut, that it may kill; it will not convince, that it may confound; it will not accuse, that it may condemn; it will spare the sinner a while, that it may torment him for ever; it will spare him here, that it may gnaw him hereafter; it will not strike till it be too late for the sinner to ward off the blow. Oh cruel mercy, to observe the sin, and let alone the sinner till the gates of mercy be shut upon him, and hell stands gaping to devour him: Gen. iv. 7, 'Sin lieth at the door.' The Hebrew word *robets* signifies *to lie down, or couch*, like some wild beast at the mouth of his cave, as if he were asleep, but indeed watcheth and waketh, and is ready to fly at all that come near it. O sirs! sin is rather *couchant* than *dormant;* it sleeps dog's sleep, that it may take the sinner at the greater advantage, and fly the more furiously in his face. But,

(4.) My *fourth* advice and counsel is this, *Take heed of resting upon closet-duties, take heed of trusting in closet-duties.*[2] Noah's dove made use of her wings, but she did not trust in her wings, but in the ark; so you must make use of closet-duties, but you must not trust in your closet-duties, but in Jesus, of whom the ark was but a type. There are many that go a round of duties, as mill horses go their round

[1] An ill conscience, saith Austin, is like a scolding wife; a man, saith he, that hath an ill conscience, he cares not to be at home, he cares not to look into his own soul, but loves to be abroad.

[2] *Amama* quotes Tarnovius, who mentions a sort of men that brought in an opinion which he calls a new gospel, that if a man perform the external duties of religion, viz., if he go to the church, hear the word, pray, &c., it was sufficient to salvation. [Qu. Anama? Tarnovius, a learned commentator on Scripture.—G.]

in a mill, and rest upon them when they have done, using the means as mediators, and so fall short of Christ and heaven at once. Closet-duties rested in, will as eternally undo a man as the greatest and foulest enormities; open wickedness slays her thousands, but a secret resting upon duties slays her ten thousands. Multitudes bleed inwardly of this disease, and die for ever. Open profaneness is the broad dirty way that leads to hell, but closet-duties rested in is a sure way, though a cleaner way, to hell. Profane persons and formal professors shall meet at last in one hell. Ah, Christians! do not make closet-duties your money, lest you and your money perish together.

The phœnix gathers sweet odoriferous sticks in Arabia together, and then blows them with her wings and burns herself with them; so do many shining professors burn themselves by resting in their duties and services. You know, in Noah's flood all that were not in the ark, though they climbed up the tallest trees, and the highest mountains and hills, yet were really drowned; so let men climb up to this duty and that, yet, if they don't get into Christ, they will be really damned. It is not thy closet, but thy Christ, that must save thee. If a man be not interested in Christ, he may perish with 'Our Father' in his mouth. It is as natural to a man to rest in his duties as it is for him to rest in his bed.

This was Bernard's temptation, who, being a little assisted in duty, could stroke his own head with *bene fecisti Bernarde*, O Bernard, this was gallantly done, now cheer up thyself. Ah, how apt is man, when he hath been a little assisted, heated, melted, enlarged, &c., in a way of duty, to go away and stroke himself, and bless himself, and hug himself, and warm himself with the sparks, with the fire of his own kindling, Isa. l. 11.

Adam was to win life and wear it; he was to be saved by his doings: 'Do this and live,' Gen. ii. 2. Hence it is that all his posterity are so prone to seek for salvation by doing: Acts ii. 37, chap. xvi. 30, 'What shall we do to be saved?' and 'good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' Mark x. 17, 20. Like father, like son. But if our own duties or doings were sufficient to save us, to what purpose did Christ leave his Father's bosom, and lay down his dearest life? &c. Closet-duties rested in may pacify conscience for a time, but this will not always hold. 'When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb; yet could they not heal him, nor cure him of his wound,' Hosea v. 13. If we rest on closet-duties, or on anything else on this side Christ, we shall find them as weak as the Assyrian, or as Jareb; we shall find to our cost that they cannot help us nor heal us; they cannot comfort us nor cure us of our wounds. As creatures, so duties, were never true to any that have trusted in them. When the Israelites were in great distress, the Lord bids them go and cry unto the gods which they had chosen, and let them deliver you, saith God, in the time of your tribulation, Judges x. 14. O sirs! if, when you are under distress of conscience, or lying upon a dying bed, God should say to you, Go to your closet prayers and performances, that you have made and rested in, go to your closet tears that you have shed and rested in, and let them save you and deliver you; oh, what miserable saviours and comforters would

they be unto you! Look, what the ark of God was to the Philistines, 1 Sam. chap. v., that closet-duties are to Satan; he trembles every time he sees a poor sinner go into his closet and come out of his closet, resting and glorying in Jesus, and not in his duties; but when he sees a poor creature confide in his closet-duties, and rest upon his closet-duties, then he rejoiceth, then he claps his hands and sings, Aha! so would I have it. Oh, rest not on anything on this side Jesus Christ; say to your graces, say to your duties, say to your holiness, You are not my saviour, you are not my mediator; and therefore you are not to be trusted to, you are not to be rested in. It is my duty to perform closet-duties, but it is my sin to rely upon them, or to put confidence in them; do them I must, but glory in them I must not. He that rests in his closet-duties, he makes a saviour of his closet-duties. Let all your closet-duties lead you to Jesus, and leave you more in communion with him, and in dependence upon him; and then thrice happy will you be, Heb. vii. 25. Let all thy closet prayers and tears, thy closet fastings and meltings, be a star to guide thee to Jesus, a Jacob's ladder by which thou mayest ascend into the bosom of eternal loves; and then thou art safe for ever.

Ah! it is sad to think, how most men have forgotten their resting-place, as the Lord complains: Jer. l. 6, 'My people have been like lost sheep, their shepherds have caused them to go astray, and have turned them away to the mountains; they have gone from mountain to hill, and forgotten their resting-place.' Ah! how many poor souls are there, that wander from mountain to hill, from one duty to another, and here they will rest, and there they will rest, and all on this side their resting-place! O sirs! it is God himself that is your resting-place; it is his free grace, it is his singular mercy, it is his infinite love that is your resting-place; it is the bosom of Christ, the favour of Christ, the satisfaction of Christ, and the pure, perfect, spotless, matchless, and glorious righteousness of Christ, that is your resting-place; and therefore say to all your closet duties and performances, Farewell; prayer, farewell; reading, farewell; fasting, farewell; tears, farewell; sighs and groans, farewell; meltings and humblings, I will never trust more to you, I will never rest more on you; but I will now return to my resting-place, I will now rest only in God and Christ, I will now rest wholly in God and Christ, I will now rest for ever in God and Christ.

It was the saying of a precious saint, that 'he was more afraid of his duties than of his sins; for the one made him often proud, the other made him always humble.' But,

(5.) My *fifth* advice and counsel is this, *Labour to bring your hearts into all your closet-prayers and performances.* Look that your tongues and your hearts keep time and tune. Ps. xvii. 1, 'Give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips,' or, as it is in the Hebrew, 'without lips of deceit.' Heart and tongue must go together; word and work, lip and life, prayer and practice, must echo one to another, or else thy prayers and thy soul will be lost together. The labour of the lips and the travail of the heart must go together.

The Egyptians of all fruits made choice of the peach to consecrate to their goddess, and for no other cause, but that the fruit thereof is like

[1] Plutarch.

to one's heart, and the leaf to one's tongue. These very heathens in the worship of their gods, thought it necessary that men's hearts and tongues should go together. Ah, Christians! when in your closet duties your hearts and your tongues go together, then you make that sweet and delightful melody that is most taking and pleasing to the King of kings. The very soul of prayer lies in the pouring out of the soul before God, 1 Sam. i. 15. Ps. xlii. 4, 'When I remember these things I pour out my soul in me.' So the Israelites poured out their souls like water before the Lord. So the church: 'The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early,' Isa. xxvi. 8, 9. So Lament. iii. 41, 'Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.' So Heb. x. 22, 'Let us draw near with a true heart,' &c. So Rom. i. 9, 'For God is my witness, whom I serve in the spirit.' 1 Cor. xiv. 15, 'I will pray with the spirit, and sing with the spirit.' Philip. iii. 3, 'We are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit.' Under the law the inward parts were only to be offered to God in sacrifice; the skin belonged to the priests. Whence we may easily gather, that truth in the inward parts, is that which is most pleasing in a sacrifice. When the Athenians would know of the oracle the cause of their often unprosperous success in battle against the Lacedæmonians, seeing they offered the choicest things they could get, in sacrifice to the gods, which their enemies did not, the oracle gave them this answer, that 'the gods were better pleased with their inward supplication without ambition, than with all their outward pomp in costly sacrifices.' Ah, sirs! the reason why so many are so unsuccessful in their closet-duties and services is because there is no more of their hearts in them. No man can make sure work or happy work in prayer but he that makes heart-work on it. When a man's heart is in his prayers, then great and sweet will be his returns from heaven. That is no prayer in which the heart of the person bears no part. When the soul is separated from the body the man is dead; and so when the heart is separated from the lip in prayer, the prayer is dead.

The Jews at this day write upon the walls of their synagogues these words, *Tophillah belo cavannah ceguph belo neshamah;* that is, a prayer without the heart, or without the intention of the affection, is like a body without a soul.

In the law of Moses the priest was commanded to wash the inwards and the feet of the sacrifices in water; and this was done, saith Philo, 'not without a mystery, to teach us to keep our hearts and affections clean when we draw nigh to God.' In all your closet-duties God looks first and most to your hearts: 'My son, give me thy heart,' Prov. xxiii. 26. It is not a piece, it is not a corner of the heart, that will satisfy the Maker of the heart; the heart is a treasure, a bed of spices, a royal throne wherein he delights. God looks not at the elegancy of your prayers, to see how neat they are; nor yet at the geometry of your prayers, to see how long they are; nor yet at the arithmetic of your prayers, to see how many they are; nor yet at the music of your prayers, nor yet at the sweetness of your voice, nor yet at the logic of your prayers; but at the sincerity of your prayers, how hearty they are. There is no prayer acknowledged, approved, accepted, recorded, or rewarded

by God, but that wherein the heart is sincerely and wholly. The true mother would not have the child divided. As God loves a broken and a contrite heart, so he loathes a divided heart, Ps. li. 17, James, i. 8. God neither loves halting nor halving; he will be served truly and totally. The royal law is, 'Thou shalt love and serve the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.' Among the heathens, when the beasts were cut up for sacrifice, the first thing the priest looked upon was the heart, and if the heart was naught, the sacrifice was rejected. Verily, God rejects all those services and sacrifices, wherein the heart is not, as you may see by comparing the Scriptures in the margin together.[1] Prayer without the heart is but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Prayer is only lovely and weighty, as the heart is in it, and no otherwise. It is not the lifting up of the voice, nor the wringing of the hands, nor the beating of the breasts, nor an affected tone, nor studied motions, nor seraphical expressions, but the stirrings of the heart, that God looks at in prayer. God hears no more than the heart speaks. If the heart be dumb, God will certainly be deaf. No prayer takes with God, but that which is the travail of the heart.

The same day Julius Cæsar came to the imperial dignity, sitting in his golden chair, he offered a beast in sacrifice to the gods; but when the beast was opened, it was without a heart, which the soothsayers looked upon as an ill omen. It is a sad omen, that thou wilt rather provoke the Lord than prevail with him, who art habitually heartless in thy closet duties. Of the heart, God seemeth to say to us, as Joseph did to his brethren, concerning Benjamin, 'Ye shall not see my face without it.'

It was the speech of blessed Bradford, that 'he would never leave a duty, till he had brought his heart into the frame of the duty; he would not leave confession of sin, till his heart was broken for sin; he would not leave petitioning for grace, till his heart was quickened and enlivened in a hopeful expectation of more grace; he would not leave gratulation, till his heart was enlarged with the sense of the mercies he enjoyed, and quickened in the return of praise.'

(6.) My *sixth* advice and counsel is this, *Be fervent, be warm, be importunate with God in all your closet duties and performances.* James v. 16, 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much;' or, as the Greek hath it [ἐνεργοῦμενη], 'The working prayer;' that is, such working prayer as sets the whole man on work, as sets all the faculties of the soul, and all the graces in the soul, at work. The word signifies such a working as notes the liveliest activity that can be. Certainly, all those usual phrases of crying, wrestling, and striving with God, which are scattered up and down in Scripture, do strongly argue that holy importunity and sacred violence that the saints of old have expressed in their addresses to God.[2] Fervency feathers the wings of prayer, and makes them fly the swifter to heaven. An arrow, if it be drawn up but a little way, flies not far; but if it be drawn up to the head, it will fly far, and pierce deeply: so fervent prayer flies as high as

[1] Prov. xxi. 27; Isa. i. 11, 12; Chap. xxix. 13; Mat. xv. 7–9; Ezek. xxxiii. 30–32; Zech. vii. 4–6; 2 Chron. xxv. 1, 2; Ps. lxxviii. 36, 37.

[2] Ps. lv. 1; Ps. lxi. 1; Ps. lxiv. 1; Ps. lxxxviii. 1, 13; Ps. cxix. 164; Jonah ii. 1, 2; Joel ii. 13; Ps. cxix. 145, 147; Ps. cxix. 20.

heaven, and will certainly bring down blessings from thence.[1] Cold prayers bespeak a denial, but fervent prayers offer a sacred violence both to heaven and earth. Look, as in a painted fire there is no heat; so in a cold prayer there is no heat, no warmth, no omnipotency, no devotion, no blessing. Cold prayers are like arrows without heads, as swords without edges, as birds without wings: they pierce not, they cut not, they fly not up to heaven. Such prayers as have no heavenly fire in them, do always freeze before they reach as high as heaven. But fervent prayer is very prevalent with God: Acts xii. 5, 'Peter, therefore, was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing.' The Greek word ἐκτενὴς signifies instant prayer, earnest prayer, stretched out prayer; prayer stretched out upon the tenters, as it were. These gracious souls did in prayer strain and stretch themselves, as men do that are running in a race; they prayed with all the strength of their souls, and with all the fervency of their spirits; and accordingly they carried the day with God, as you may see in the following verses. So Acts xxvi. 7, 'Unto which promise, our twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night,' or rather as the Greek hath it, ἐν ἐκτενείᾳ, 'in a stretched out manner, serving God day and night.' These twelve tribes, or the godly Jews of the twelve tribes of Israel, stretched out their hearts, their affections, their graces, to the utmost in prayer. In all your private retirements, do as the twelve tribes did. Rom. xii. 11, 'Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' The Greek word ζέοντες, signifies *seething hot*. God loves to see his people zealous and warm in his service. Without fervency of spirit, no service finds acceptance in heaven. God is a pure act, and he loves that his people should be lively and active in his service; ver. 12, 'Continuing instant in prayer;' προσκαρτεροῦντες, 'continuing with all your might in prayer.' It is a metaphor from hunting dogs, that will never give over the game till they have got it. Rom. xv. 30, 'That ye strive together with me, in your prayers to God for me;' συναγωνίσασθαι, strive mightily, strive as champions strive, even to an agony, as the word imports. It is a military word, and notes such fervent wrestling or striving, as is for life and death. Col. iv. 12, 'Always labouring fervently for you in prayer.' The Greek word ἀγωνιζόμενος, that is here used, signifies to strive or wrestle, as those do that strive for mastery; it notes the vehemency and fervour of Epaphras his prayers for the Colossians. Look, as the wrestlers do bend, and writhe, and stretch, and strain every joint of their bodies, that they may be victorious; so Epaphras did bend, and writhe, and stretch, and strain every joint of his soul,—if I may so speak,—that he might be victorious with God upon the Colossians' account. So, when Jacob was with God alone, ah how earnest and fervent was he in his wrestlings with God, Gen. xxxii. 24–27, Hosea xii. 4, 5. He wrestles and weeps, and weeps and wrestles; he tugs hard with God, he holds his hold, and he will not let God go, till as a prince he had prevailed with him. Fervent prayer is the soul's contention, the soul struggling with God; it is a sweating work, it is the sweat and blood of the soul, it is a laying out to the uttermost all the strength and powers of the soul. He that would gain victory over God in private prayer, must strain every string of his heart; he must, in beseeching God, besiege him, and so get the better of him; he must

[1] *Qui timide rogat, docet negare*, saith the philosopher.

be like importunate beggars, that will not be put off with frowns, or silence, or sad answers. Those that would be masters of their requests, must, like the importunate widow, press God so far as to put him to an holy blush, as I may say with reverence: they must with an holy impudence, as Basil speaks, make God ashamed to look them in the face, if he should deny the importunity of their souls.

Had Abraham had a little more of this impudence, saith one,[1] when he made suit for Sodom, it might have done well. Abraham brought down the price to ten righteous, and there his modesty stayed him; had he gone lower, God only knows what might have been done, for 'God went not away, saith the text, 'till he had left communing with Abraham,' that is, till Abraham had no more to say to God. Abraham left over asking, before God left over granting; he left over praying, before God left over bating; and so Sodom was lost.

Oh the heavenly fire, the holy fervency that was in Daniel's closet prayer! 'O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do, defer not for thine own sake,' Dan. ix. 19. Look, as there be two kinds of antidotes against poison, viz., hot and cold, so there are two kinds of antidotes against all the troubles of this life, viz., fervent prayers and holy patience: the one hot, the other cold; the one quickening, and the other quenching, and holy Daniel made use of them both. Fervency to prayer, is as the fire was to the spices in the censer, or as wings to the bird, or as oil to the wheels; and this Daniel found by experience. God looks not for any James with horny knees, through assiduity of prayer; nor for any Bartholomew with a century of prayers for the morning, and as many for the evening; but for fervency of spirit in prayer, which alone carries all with God. Feeble prayers, like weak pangs, go over, and never brings a mercy to the birth. Cold prayers are still-born children, in whom the Father of spirits can take no pleasure. Look, as a painted man is no man, and as painted fire is no fire; so a cold prayer is no prayer. Such prayers never win upon the heart of God that do not first warm our own hearts. As a body without a soul, much wood without a fire, a bullet in a gun without powder; so are all prayers without fervency of spirit.

Luther terms prayer *bombarda Christianorum*, the gun or cannon of Christians, or the Christian's gun-shot.

The hottest springs send forth their waters by ebullitions. Cold prayers make a smoke, a smother in the eyes of God. Lazy prayers never procure noble answers; lazy beggars may starve for all their begging, Isa. i. 15, and lxv. 5.

Such as have a male in their flock, and offer to the Lord a female; such as offer to the Lord the torn, and the lame, and the sick; such as turn off God with their cold, lazy, sleepy, and formal devotions, are condemned, cast, and cursed by God, Mal. i. 13, 14. David compares his prayers to incense, and no incense was offered without fire, Ps. cxli. 2; it was that that made the smoke of it to ascend. It is only fervent prayer that hits the mark, and that pierces the walls of heaven, though, like those of Gaza, Isa. xlv. 2, made of brass and iron. While the child only whimpers and whines in the cradle, the mother lets it alone; but

[1] Dor. Don. fol. p. 522, Gen. xviii. 22, 23. [Query—Dr Donne? Cf. Sermon on Genesis xviii. 25.—G.

when once it sets up its note, and cries outright, then she runs and takes it up. So it is with a Christian: Ps. xxxiv. 6, 'This poor man cried.' There is his fervency, he *cried;* but it was silently and secretly, in the presence of King Achish, as Moses did at the Red Sea, and as Nehemiah did in the presence of the king of Persia. 'And the Lord heard him, and delivered him out of all his troubles;' here is his *prevalency.* So Latimer plied the throne of grace with great fervency, crying out, 'Once again, Lord, once again restore the gospel to England,' and God heard him.[1]

Hudson the martyr, deserted at the stake, went from under his chain, and having prayed fervently, he was comforted immediately, and suffered valiantly.[2]

I have read of one Giles of Bruxels, a Dutch martyr, who was so fervent in his prayer, kneeling by himself in some secret place of the prison where he was, that he seemed to forget himself; and being called to his meat, he neither heard nor saw who stood by him, till he was lifted up by the arms, and then he would speak gently to them, as one awaked out of a trance.[3]

So Gregory Nazianzen, speaking of his sister Gorgonia, saith, that, in the vehemency of her prayer, she came to a religious impudency with God, so as to threaten heaven, and tell God that she would never depart from his altar till she had her petition granted.[4]

Let us make it our business to follow these noble examples, as ever we would so prince it in prayer as to prevail with God. An importunate soul in prayer is like the poor beggar, that prays and knocks, that prays and waits, that prays and works, that knocks and knits,[5] that begs and patches, and will not stir from the door till he hath an alms. Well, friends, remember this, God respects no more lukewarm prayers than he doth lukewarm persons, and they are such that he hath threatened to spue out of his mouth. Those prayers that are but lip-labour are lost labour; and therefore, in all your closet prayers, look to the fervency of your spirits.

(7.) My *seventh* advice and counsel is this, *Be constant, as well as fervent, in closet-prayer.* Look that you hold on and hold out, and that you persevere to the end in private prayer: 1 Thes. v. 17, 'Pray without ceasing.' A man must always pray habitually, though not actually; he must have his heart in a praying disposition in all estates and conditions. Though closet-prayer may have an intermission, yet it must never have a cessation: Luke xviii. 1, 'And he spake a parable unto them, to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint,' or, as the Greek hath it, ἐγκακεῖν, not to shrink back, as sluggards in work, or cowards in war. Closet-prayer is a fire like that on the altar, that was never to go out, day nor night: 1 Thes. iii. 10, 'Night and day praying exceedingly.' Paul speaks like a man made up all of prayer, like a man that minded nothing so much as prayer: so Eph. vi. 18, 'Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance.' Calvin makes this difference between 'praying always' in the beginning of this verse, and 'praying with perseverance' in the end of this verse: 'By praying always,'

[1] Clarke, as before. Foxe, *sub nomine.*—G. [2] Ibid.—G. [3] Ibid.—G.
[4] Paulin. Epist. lib. i. Epist. 4. [5] See *Glossary* for other uses of this word.—G.

saith he, 'he exhorts us to pray in prosperity as well as in adversity, and not to quit the duty of prayer in a prosperous estate, because we are not driven to it by outward pressing necessities and miseries; and by praying with perseverance, he admonisheth us that we be not weary of the work, but continue instant and constant in its performance, though we have not presently what we pray for.' So that 'praying always' is opposed to a neglect of the duty in its proper times and seasons, and 'praying with perseverance' is opposed to a fainting in our spirits, in respect of this or that particular suit or request that we put up to God. When God turns a deaf ear to our prayers, we must not fret nor faint, we must not be dismayed nor discouraged, but we must hold up and hold on in the duty of prayer with invincible patience, courage, and constancy, as the church did: Lament. iii. 8, 44, 55–57, compared; Col. iv. 2, 'Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.' We must be constant and instant in closet prayer; we must wait upon it, and lay all aside for it. He that is only in his closet by fits and starts, will neither glorify God nor advantage his own soul. If we do not make a trade of closet-prayer, we shall never make any yearnings of[1] closet-prayer. Look, as they that get money by their iron mills do keep a continual fire in their iron mills, so they that will get any soul-good by closet duties, they must keep close and constant to closet duties. The hypocrite is only constant in inconstancy; he is only in his closet by fits and starts. Now and then, when he is in a good mood, you shall find him step into his closet, but he never holds it: Job xxvii. 10, 'Will he always call upon God,' or, as the Hebrew hath it, 'Will he in every time call upon God?' When they are under the smarting rod, or when they are upon the tormenting rack, or when they are under grievous wants, or when they are struck with panic-fears, &c., then you shall have them run to their closets, as Joab ran to the horns of the altar, when he was in danger of death; but they never persevere, they never hold out to the end; and therefore in the end they lose both their closet prayers and their souls together, Isa. xxvi. 16, Ps. lxxviii. 34, Zech. vii. 5.

It was a most profane and blasphemous speech of that atheistical wretch,[2] that told God 'that he was no common beggar, and that he never troubled him before with prayer, and if he would but hear him that time, he would never trouble him again.'

Closet-prayer is a hard work; and a man must tug hard at it, and stick close to it, as Jacob did, if ever he intends to make any internal or eternal advantages by it, Gen. xxxii. Daniel chose rather to run the hazard of his life, than to give over praying in his chamber, chap. vi. It is not he that begins in the spirit and ends in the flesh, Gal. iii. 3; it is not he that puts his hand to the plough and looks back, Luke ix. 62; but he that perseveres to the end in prayer, that shall be saved and crowned, Mat. xxiv. 13. It is he that perseveres in well doing that shall eat of the hidden manna, and that shall have the white stone, 'and in the stone a new name written, which no man knows saving him that receiveth it,' Rev. ii. 17. Those precious, praying, mourning souls in that Ezekiel ix. 4, 6, that were marked to be preserved in Jerusalem, were distinguished, say some of the learned, by the character ת, *tau*, which is the

[1] Query 'after'?—G., or 'earnings of?'—Ed. [2] Heil. Mic. p. 376. [As before.—G.]

last of all the Hebrew letters, to teach them that they must hold out and hold on to the end in well doing.[1] It is constancy in closet-duty that crowns the Christian and commends the duty.

But would God have his people to cast off their callings, and to cast off all care of their relations, and shut themselves up in their closets, and there spend their whole time in secret prayer? Oh, no! Every duty must have its time and place; and as one friend must not shut out another, so one duty must not shut out another, Eccles. iii. 1. The duties of my particular calling as I am a man must not shut out the duties of my general calling as I am a Christian, nor the duties of my general calling as I am a Christian must not shut out the duties of my particular calling as I am a man. But that you may be fully satisfied in this case, you must remember that a man may be said to pray always,

[1.] *First, When his heart is always in a praying frame.* Look, as a man may be truly said to give always whose heart is always in a giving frame, and to suffer always whose heart is always in a suffering frame —'For thy sake are we killed all the day long,' Ps. xliv. 22—and to sin always whose heart is always in a sinning frame, 2 Peter ii. 14, Jer. ix. 3, so a man may be as truly said to pray always whose heart is always in a praying frame.

[2.] *Secondly,* A man prays always *when he takes hold on every fit season and opportunity for the pouring out of his soul before the Lord in his closet.* To pray always is ἐν παντὶ καίρῳ, to pray in every opportunity; but of this before.

It is observed by some of Proteus, that he was wont to give certain oracles, but it was hard to make him speak and deliver them, but he would turn himself into several shapes and forms; yet if they would hold out, and press him hard without fear, into whatsoever form or shape he appeared, they were sure to have satisfactory oracles.[2] So if we continue constant in our closet-wrestlings with God, if we hold on in private prayer though God should appear to us in the form or shape of a judge, an enemy, a stranger, we shall certainly speed at last: 'O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt; and her daughter was made whole from that very hour,' Mat. xv. 28.

The philosopher being asked in his old age why he did not give over his practice and take his ease, answered, 'When a man is to run a race of forty furlongs, would you have him sit down at the nine-and-thirtieth, and so lose the prize, the crown for which he ran?'[3] O sirs! if you hold not out to the end in closet-prayer, you will certainly lose the heavenly prize, the crown of life, the crown of righteousness, the crown of glory. To *continue* in giving glory to God in this way of duty, is as necessary and requisite as to *begin* to give glory to God in this way of duty; for though the beginning be more than half, yet the end is more than all; *finis coronat opus.* The God of all perfections looks that our *ultimum vitæ* should be his *optimum gloriæ,* that our last works should be our best works; and that we should persevere in closet-prayer to the end, Rev. ii. 10.

(8.) My *eighth* advice and counsel is this, *In all your closet-prayers,*

[1] J. [S.] Menoch. Com. in Ezek. cap. ix. 4. [Comment: S. S. 1719, 2 vols. folio.—G.]
[2] Homer, *Ody.* iv. 410 and 455, &c. Ovid, *Art. Am.* i. 761, &c.—G.
[3] *Non progredi est regredi.*

thirst and long after communion with God. In all your private retirements, take up in nothing below fellowship with God, in nothing below a sweet and spiritual enjoyment of God, Cant. iii. 1–3, Ps. lxxiii. 28. Ps. xxvii. 4, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.' The temple of the Lord, without communion with the Lord of the temple, will not satisfy David's soul: Ps. xlii. 1, 2, 'As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?'

The hart, as Aristotle and others observe, is of all creatures most hot and dry of itself; but especially when it is chased and hunted, then it is extreme thirsty. The female is here meant, as the Greek article, ἡ ἔλαφος, doth manifest. Now, in the females the passions of thirst are more strong, as the naturalists observe. By this David discovers what a vehement and inflamed thirst there was in his soul after communion with God; and as nothing could satisfy the hunted hart but the water brooks, so nothing could satisfy his soul but the enjoyments of God: Ps. xliii. 4, 'Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy.' The altar of God is here put for the worship of God. Now, it is not barely the worship of God, but communion with God in his worship, that was David's exceeding joy: Ps. lxiii. 1, 2, 'O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, wherein no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.' David's soul did not thirst after a crown, a kingdom, or any worldly greatness or glory, but after a choice and sweet enjoyment of God in his wilderness estate. Never did any woman with child long more after this or that, than David's soul did long to enjoy sensible communion with God in the midst of all his sorrows and sufferings: Ps. lxxxiv. 2, 'My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.' By the 'courts of the Lord,' we are to understand the ordinances. Now, these without communion with God would never have satisfied David's soul.

I commend that speech of Bernard, *Nunquam abs te, absque te recedo*, 'I never come to thee, but by thee; I never come from thee, without thee.'[1]

Whenever you go into your closets, press hard after real and sensible communion with God, that so you may come out of your closets with some shines of God upon your spirits, as Moses came down from the mount with his face shining, Exod. xxxiv. 29–35. Oh do not take up in your closet prayers, or tears, or joys, or enlargements; but labour and long to enjoy that inward and close fellowship with God in your closets, as may leave such a choice and sweet savour of God, both upon your hearts and lives, as others may be forced to say, Surely these have been with Jesus, Acts iv. 13. It is sad when Christians return from their closets to their shops, their trades, their families, their commerce, &c., without the least visible rays of divine glory upon them.

O sirs! closet-prayer will be found to be but a dry, sapless, lifeless,

[1] Bernard, Epist. 116.

heartless, comfortless thing, if you do not enjoy communion with God in it. Communion with God is the very life, soul, and crown of all your closet duties; and therefore press after it as for life. When you go into your closets, let every thing go that may hinder your fruition of Christ, and let everything be embraced, that makes way for your enjoyment of Christ. Oh let closet-prayer be a golden bridge, a wherry, a chariot to convey your souls over to God, and to bring you into a more intimate communion with God. Let no closet duty satisfy you or content you, wherein you have not conversed with God, as a child converseth with his father, or as a wife converseth with her husband, or as a friend converseth with his friend, even face to face. Nothing speaks out more unsoundness, falseness, and baseness of heart than this, when men make duty the end of duty; prayer the end of prayer; than when men can begin a duty, and go on in a duty, and close up a duty, and bless and stroke themselves after a duty, and yet never enjoy the least communion with God in the duty.

Quest. But how shall a man know when he hath a real communion with God in a duty or no?

This is a very noble and necessary question, and accordingly it calls for a clear and satisfactory answer; and therefore thus:

Sol. [1.] *First*, A man may have communion with God *in sorrow and tears, when he hath not communion with God in joy, delight*, Ps. li. 17. A man may have communion with God in a heart-humbling, a heart-melting, and a heart-abasing way, when he hath not communion with God in a heart-reviving, a heart-cheering, and a heart-comforting way. It is a very great mistake among many tender-spirited Christians, to think that they have no communion with God in their closets, except they meet with God embracing and kissing, Cant. ii. 4–6, cheering and comforting up their souls. When they find God raising the springs of joy and comfort in their souls; when they find God a-speaking peace unto them; when they find the singular sensible presence of God cheering, refreshing, and enlarging of them in their closets, oh then they are willing to grant that they have had sweet communion with God in their closets. But if God meets with them in their closets, and only breaks their hearts for sin, and from sin, if he meets with them and only makes his power and his presence manifest, in debasing and casting down of their souls, upon the sight and sense of their strong corruptions and many imperfections, how unwilling are they to believe that they have had any communion with God! Well, friends, remember this once for all, viz., that a Christian may have as real communion with God in a heart-humbling way, as he can have in a heart-comforting way. A Christian may have as choice communion with God when his eyes are full of tears, as he can have when his heart is full of joy, John xx. 11–19. Sometimes God meets with a poor Christian in his closet, and exceedingly breaks him and humbles him, and at other times he meets with the same Christian in his closet, and mightily cheers him, and comforts him; sometimes God meets with a poor soul in his closet, and there he sweetly quiets him and stills him, and at other times he meets with the same soul in his closet, and then he greatly revives him and quickens him. God doth not always come upon the soul one way, he doth not always come in at one and the same door, John iii. 8. We sometimes look for

a friend to come in at the fore-door, and then he comes in at the back-door; and at other times, when we look for him at the back-door, then he comes in at the fore-door; and just so it is with God's coming into his people's souls. Sometimes they go into their closets, and look that God will come in at the fore-door of joy and comfort, and then God comes in at the back-door of sorrow and grief; and at other times, when they look that God should come in at the back-door of humiliation, breaking, and melting their hearts, then God comes in at the fore-door of joy and consolation, cheering and rejoicing their souls. But,

[2.] *Secondly*, I answer, *That all Christians do not enjoy a like communion with God in their closets.* Some enjoy much communion with God in their closets, and others enjoy but little communion with God in their closets. Moses had a more clear, glorious, and constant communion with God in his days, than any others had in those times wherein he lived, Exod. xxxiii. 11; Deut. v. 4; Num. xii. 7, 8. God spake to none 'face to face,' as he did to Moses. And Abraham, Gen. xviii., in his time, had a more close, friendly, and intimate communion with God, than holy Lot, or any others had in that day. And though all the disciples, Judas excepted, had sweet communion with Christ in the days of his flesh, yet Peter, James, and John had a more clear, choice, and full communion with him than the rest had, Mat. xvii. 1–4. Among all the disciples John had most bosom-communion with Christ, he was the greatest favourite in Christ's court, he leaned on Christ's bosom, he could say anything to Christ, and he could know anything of Christ, and he could have anything of Christ, John xiii. 23, xx. 2, and xxi. 20. Now that all Christians do not enjoy communion with God alike in their closets, may be thus made evident;—

First, All Christians do not prepare alike to enjoy closet-communion with God; and therefore all Christians do not enjoy communion with God alike in their closets, Eccles. v. 1; Ps. x. 17. Commonly he that prepares and fits himself most for closet-communion with God, he is the man that enjoys most closet-communion with God, 2 Chron. xxx. 17–20.

Secondly, All Christians do not alike prize communion with God in their closets. Some prize communion with God in their closets before all and above all other things; as that noble marquis said, 'Cursed be he that prefers all the world to one hour's communion with God.'[1] They look upon it as that pearl of price, for the enjoyment of which they are ready to sell all and part with all; others prize it at a lower rate, and so enjoy less of it than those that set a higher price and value upon it, Job xxiii. 12; Ps. cxix. 127; Mat. xiii. 45, 46.

Thirdly, All Christians do not alike press after communion with God in their closets. Some press after communion with God in their closets, as a condemned man presses after a pardon, or as a close prisoner presses after enlargement, or as as a poor beggar presses after an alms, Ps. lxxiii. 8, Isa. xxvi. 8, 9. Now, you know these press on with the greatest earnestness, the greatest fervency, and the greatest importunity imaginable. But others press after communion with God in their closets more coldly, more carelessly, more slightly, more lazily: 'I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?' Cant. v. 3. Now, they that press hardest after communion

[1] Galeacius Carracciolus. Cf. Sibbes, vol. i. pp. 289, 290.—G.

with God in their closets, they are usually blessed with the highest degrees of closet-communion with God.

Fourthly, All Christians don't alike improve their communion with God in their closets; and therefore all Christians don't enjoy communion with God alike in their closets. Some Christians do make a more wise, a more humble, a more holy, a more faithful, a more fruitful, and a more constant improvement of their closet-communion with God than others do; and therefore they are blessed with higher degrees of communion with God than others are. Some Christians do more improve their closet-communion with God against the world, the flesh, and the devil, than others do; and therefore no wonder if they do enjoy more communion with God in their closets than others do.

Fifthly, All Christians do not alike need communion with God in their closets; and therefore all Christians have not a like communion with God in their closets. All Christians have not a like place in the mystical body of Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 14, *seq.;* some rule, and others are ruled. Now, every man stands in more or less need of communion with God, according to the place that he bears in the body of Christ. Again, all Christians have not alike burdens to bear, nor alike difficulties to encounter with, nor alike dangers to escape, nor alike temptations to wrestle with, nor alike passions and corruptions to mortify, nor alike mercies and experiences to improve, &c.; and therefore all Christians don't need alike communion with God in their closets. Now, commonly God lets himself out more or less in ways of communion, according as the various necessities and conditions of his people doth require.

Sixthly and lastly, *All Christians do not alike meet with outward interruptions, nor inward interruptions;* and therefore all Christians have not alike communion with God in their closets. Some Christians meet with a world of outward and inward interruptions more than others do; some Christians' outward callings, relations, conditions, and stations, &c., do afford more plentiful matter and occasions, to interrupt them in their closet-communion with God, than other Christians' callings, relations, conditions, and stations do, &c. Besides, Satan is more busy with some Christians than he is with other Christians; and corruptions work more strongly and violently in some Christians than they do in other Christians, &c.; and let me add this to all the rest, that the very natural tempers of some Christians are more averse to closet-duties than the natural tempers of other Christians are; and therefore all Christians have not alike communion with God in their closets, but some have more and some have less, according as God in his infinite wisdom sees best.

Now, let no Christian say, that he hath no communion with God in closet-prayer, because he hath not such a full, such a choice, such a sweet, such a sensible, and such a constant communion with God in closet-prayer, as such and such saints have had, or as such and such saints now have; for all saints do not alike enjoy communion with God in their closets: some have more, some have less; some have a higher degree, others a lower; some are rapt up in the third heaven, when others are but rapt up in the clouds. What man is there so childish and babyish as to argue thus, that he hath no wisdom, because he hath

not the wisdom of Solomon; or, that he hath no strength, because he hath not the strength of Samson; or, that he hath no life, because he hath not the swiftness of Ahimaaz; or, that he hath no estate, because he hath not the riches of Dives? And yet so childish and babyish many weak Christians are, as to argue thus: viz., that they have no communion with God in their closets, because they have not such high, such comfortable, and such constant communion with God in their closets, as such and such saints have had, or as such and such saints now have; whereas they should seriously consider, that though some saints have a great communion with God, yet other saints have but a small communion with God; and though some Christians have a strong communion with God, yet other Christians have but a weak communion with God; and though some of the people of God have a very close and near communion with God, yet others of the people of God have but a more remote communion with God; and though some of God's servants have a daily, constant, and uninterrupted communion with God, yet others of his servants have but a more transient and inconstant communion with God. But,

[3.] *Thirdly*, I answer, *When a man acts grace in closet-duties, then certainly he hath communion with God in closet-duties*, 2 Tim. i. 17, 1 Tim. ii. 8. When a man in closet-duties acts faith on God, or faith on the promises, or faith on the blood of Christ; or when a man in private duties acts repentance for sin, or love to Jesus Christ, or sets up God as the object of his fear, or as the object of his joy, &c., then he hath communion with God, then he hath fellowship with the Father, and with the Son, 1 John i. 3. An unregenerate man may act gifts and parts in a duty, but he cannot act grace in a duty; for no man can act grace in a duty, but he that hath grace in his soul; and hence it comes to pass that unsanctified persons under the highest activity of their arts, parts, and gifts in religious duties, enjoy no communion with God at all; witness the scribes and pharisees, Demas, Judas, Simon Magus, &c., Isa. i. 11–13. As ever you would have an evidence of your communion with God in closet-duties, carefully look to the activity of your graces, carefully stir up the grace of God which is in you, 2 Tim. i. 6. But,

[4.] *Fourthly*, I answer, *When a man hath communion with God in his closet, then he gives God the glory of all his actings and activities*, Ps. cxv. 1. Communion with God always helps a man to set the crown of praise and honour upon the head of God. Witness that gracious and grateful doxology of David and his people, in that 1 Chron. xxix. 13, 'Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.' Men that enjoy no communion with God in religious duties, are still a-sacrificing unto their own net, and a-burning incense unto their own drag, Hab. i. 16; they are still a-blessing themselves, and a-stroking of themselves, and applauding themselves; they think the garland of praise, the crown of honour, becomes no head but their own, Luke xvii. 11, 12. But now, men that enjoy communion with God in religious duties, they will uncrown themselves to crown God, they will uncrown their duties to crown the God of their duties, they will uncrown their arts, parts, gifts, and enlargements, to set the crown of praise upon the head of God alone, Acts iii. 11–13, 16; Rev. iv. 10, 11; chap. v. 11,

12. Thou thinkest that thou hast communion with God in closet-duties, yea, thou sayest that thou hast communion with God in closet-duties; but on whose head dost thou put the garland of praise? Ps. cxlviii. 13. If on God's head, thou hast communion with God; if on thine own head, thou hast no communion with God. As all the rivers run into the sea, and all the lines meet in the centre, so, when all our closet-duties terminate and centre in the advance of God's glory, then have we communion with God in them.

Constantine did use to write the name of Christ over his door. When a man hath communion with Christ in a duty, then he will write the name of Christ, the honour of Christ, upon his duty. Some say that the name of Jesus was engraven upon the heart of Ignatius; sure I am, when a man hath communion with God in a duty, then you shall find the honour and glory of Jesus engraven upon that duty. But,

[5.] *Fifthly*, I answer, *When the performance of closet-duties leaves the soul in a better frame, then a man hath communion with God in them.* When a man comes off from closet-duties in a more holy frame, or in a more humble frame, or in a more spiritual frame, or in a more watchful frame, or in a more heavenly frame, or in a more broken frame, or in a more quickened and enlivened frame, &c., then certainly he hath had communion with God in those duties. When a man comes out of his closet, and finds the frame of his heart to be more strongly set against sin than ever, and to be more highly resolved to walk with God than ever, and to be more eminently crucified to the world then ever, and to be more divinely fixed against temptations than ever, then without all peradventure he hath had communion with God in his closet.

[6.] *Sixthly*, I answer, *When closet-duties fit a man for those other duties that lie next his hand, then doubtless he hath had communion with God in them.* When private duties fit a man for public duties, or when private duties fit a man for the duties of his place, calling, and condition, wherein God hath set him, then certainly he hath had fellowship with God in them, Eccles. ix. 10. When a man in closet duties finds more spiritual strength and power to perform the duties that are next incumbent upon him, then assuredly he hath met with God; when private prayer fits me more for family prayer, or public prayer, then I may safely conclude that God hath drawn near to my soul in private prayer; or when one closet duty fits me for another closet duty, as when praying fits me for reading, or reading for praying; or when the more external duties in my closet, viz., reading or praying, fits me for those more spiritual and internal duties, viz., self-examination, holy meditation, soul-humiliation, &c., then I may rest satisfied that there hath been some choice intercourse between God and my soul. When the more I pray in my closet, the more fit I am to pray in my closet; and the more I read in my closet, the more fit I am to read in my closet; and the more I meditate in my closet, the more fit I am to meditate in my closet; and the more I search and examine my heart in my closet, the more fit I am to search and examine my heart in my closet; and the more I humble and abase my soul in my closet, the more fit I am to humble and abase my soul in my closet: then I may be confident that I have had communion with God in my closet.

[7.] *Seventhly*, I answer, *That all private communion with God is very soul-humbling and soul-abasing.* Abraham was a man that had much private communion with God, and a man that was very vile and low in his own eyes: Gen. xviii. 27, 'And Abraham answered and said, Behold, now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes.' In respect of my original, saith Abraham, 'I am but base dust and ashes;' and in respect of my deserts, I deserve to be burnt to ashes. There are none so humble as they that have nearest communion with God, Gen. xxviii. 10–18. Jacob was a man that had much private communion with God, and a man that was very little in his own eyes: Gen. xxii. 10, 'I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant;' or, as the Hebrew hath it, 'I am less than all thy mercies.' When Jacob had to deal with Laban, he pleads his merit; but when he hath to do with God, he debaseth himself below the least of his mercies, Gen. xxxi. 38–41. Moses was a man that had much private communion with God, as I have formerly evidenced, and a man that was the meekest and humblest person in all the world: Num. xii. 3, 'Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth.'

Josephus, writing of Moses, saith, if he may be believed, 'that he was so free from passions, that he knew no such thing in his own soul; he only knew passions by their names, and saw them in others, but felt them not in himself.' And so, when the glory of God appeared to him, he falls upon his face, Num. xvi. 22, in token of humility and self-abasing. David was a man that had much private communion with God, as is granted on all hands; and how greatly doth he debase himself and vilify himself! 1 Sam. xxvi. 20, 'The king of Israel is come out to seek a flea;' and what more weak and contemptible than a flea? So chap. xxiv. 14, 'After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea?' As if David had said, 'It is not worth the while, the labour; it is below the dignity and honour of the king of Israel to take such pains and to pursue so violently after such a poor nothing as I am, who hath no more strength nor power to bite or hurt than a dead dog or a poor flea hath.' So Ps. xxii. 6, 'But I am a worm, and no man.'[1] Now, what is more weak, what less regarded, what more despicable, what more trampled under foot than a poor worm? The Hebrew word *tolagnath*, that is here rendered worm, signifies a very little worm, such as breed in scarlet, which are so little that a man can scarcely see them, or perceive them. Thus you see that holy David debaseth himself below a worm, yea, below the least of worms. No man sets so low a value upon himself as he doth who hath most private communion with God. The four-and-twenty elders cast down their crowns at the feet of Jesus Christ, Rev. iv. 10, 11. Their crowns note all their inward and outward dignities, excellencies, and glories; and the casting down of their crowns notes their great humility and self-debasement. When Christians, in their closets and out of their closets, can cast down their crowns, their duties, their services, their graces, their enlargements, their enjoyments, &c., at the feet of Jesus Christ, and sit down debasing and lessening of them-

[1] As Nazianzen said of Athanasius, He was high in worth, and humble in heart.

selves, then certainly they have had a very near and sweet communion with God.[1]

Chrysostom hath a remarkable saying of humility: 'Suppose,' saith he, 'that a man were defiled with all manner of sin and enormity, yet humble, and another man enriched with gifts, graces, and duties, yet proud, the humble sinner were in a safer condition than this proud saint.'

When a man can come off from closet-duties, and say, as Ignatius once said of himself, *Non sum dignus dici minimus*, I am not worthy to be called the least, then certainly he hath had fellowship with God in them. All the communion that the creature hath with God in his closet is very soul-humbling and soul-abasing. In all a man's communion with God, some beams, some rays of the glory and majesty of God, will shine forth upon his soul. Now all divine manifestations are very humbling and abasing, as you may clearly see in those two great instances of Job and Isaiah: Job xlii. 5, 6 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee: Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' Isaiah vi. 1, 5, 'In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.' What sweet communion had Elijah with God in the low cave!

There was a gentlewoman, of no ordinary quality or breeding, who, being much troubled in mind, and sadly deserted by God, could not be drawn by her husband, or any other Christian friends, either to hear or read anything that might work for her spiritual advantage; at last her husband, by much importunity, prevailed so far with her, that she was willing he should read one chapter in the Bible to her; so he read that Isaiah 57th, and when he came to the 15th verse, 'For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.' Oh, says she, is it so, that God dwells with a contrite and humble spirit? Then I am sure he dwells with me, for my heart is broken into a thousand pieces. Oh happy text and happy time, that ever I should hear such comfort! and she was thereupon recovered. The more communion any man hath with God, the more humble and broken his heart will be.

Holy Bradford was a man that had much private communion with God, and he would many times subscribe himself in his letters, 'John the hypocrite, and a very painted sepulchre.'[2] Agur was one of the wisest and holiest men on the earth in his days, and he condemned himself for being more brutish than any man, and not having the understanding of a man, Prov. xxx. 2. How sweet is the smell of the lowly violet, that hides his head, above all the gaudy tulips that be in

[1] Austin being once asked what was the first grace, answered, humility; what the second, humility; what the third, humility. [See Index, under *Humility*, for other references to this.—G.]

[2] Foxe his Acts and Mon. [*Sub nomine.*—G.]

your garden. The lowly Christian is the most amiable and the most lovely Christian. When a man can come out of his closet, and cry out with Augustine, 'I hate that which I am, and love and desire that which I am not. O wretched man that I am, in whom the cross of Christ hath not yet eaten out the poisonous and the bitter taste of the first tree.' Or, as another saith, 'Lord, I see, and yet am blind; I will, and yet rebel; I hate, and yet I love; I follow, and yet I fall; I press forward, yet I faint; I wrestle, yet I halt;' then he may be confident that he hath had communion with God in his closet. He that comes off from closet-duties in a self-debasing way, and in laying of himself low at the foot of God, he certainly hath had communion with God; but when men come out of their closets with their hearts swelled and lifted up, as the hearts of the pharisees were, Luke xviii. 11, 12, it is evident that they have had no communion with God. God hath not been near to their souls, who say, stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou, Isa. lxv. 5. But,

[8.] *Eighthly*, and lastly, *When a man finds such a secret virtue and power running through his closet-duties, as wounds and weakens his beloved corruption, as breaks the strength and the power of his special sin, as sets his heart more fully, resolutely, and constantly against his darling lust, as stirs up a greater rage, and a more bitter hatred, and a more fierce indignation against the toad in the bosom, then certainly he hath had communion with God in his closet-duties.* Consult these scriptures: Isa. ii. 20, 'In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they have made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats.' In the day wherein God should take these poor hearts into communion with himself, their hearts should be filled with such rage and indignation against their most delectable and desirable idols, that they should take not only those made of trees and stones, but even their most precious and costly idols, those that were made of silver and gold, and cast them to the moles and to the bats, to note their horrible hatred and indignation against them. Idolatry was the darling-sin of the Jews; their hearts were so exceedingly affected and delighted with their idols, that they did not care what they spent upon them: Isa. xlvi. 6, 'They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith, and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship.' The word here used for *lavish*, in the Hebrew, signifies properly *to waste*, or spend riotously; they set so light by their treasure, that they cared not what they spent upon their idols. God gave them gold and silver as pledges of his favour and bounty, and they lavish it out upon their idols, as if God had hired them to be wicked. Oh, but when God should come and take these poor wretches into a close and near communion with himself, then you shall find their wrath and rage to rise against their idols, as you may see in that Isa. xxx. 19–21. Their communion with God is more than hinted; but mark, ver. 22, 'Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold; thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.' None defile, deface, detest, and disgrace their idols like those that are taken into communion with God. Fellowship with God will make a man cast away, as a menstruous cloth,

those very idols, in which he hath most delighted, and with which he hath been most pleased and enamoured. Idols were Ephraim's bosom-sin. Hosea iv. 17, 'Ephraim is joined,' or glued, as the Hebrew hath it, 'to idols; let him alone.' Oh! but when you find Ephraim taken into close communion with God, as you do in that Hosea xiv. 4–7, then you shall find another spirit upon him: ver. 8, 'Ephraim shall say, what have I to do any more with idols?' I have had too much to do with them already, I will never have to do with them any more. Oh! how doth my soul detest and abhor them, and rise up against them. Oh! how do I now more loathe and abominate them, than ever I have formerly loved them, or delighted in them. After the return of the Jews out of Babylon, they so hated and abhorred idols, that in the time of the Romans they chose rather to die, than suffer the eagle, which was the imperial arms, to be set up in their temple.

Though closet-duties are weak in themselves, yet when a man hath communion with God in them, then they prove exceeding powerful to the casting down of strongholds, and vain imaginations, and every high thing and thought, that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. When a man comes out of his closet with a heart more fully and stedfastly set against every known sin, but especially against his bosom-sin, his darling-sin, his Delilah that he played and sported himself most with, and that he hath hugged with pleasure and delight in his bosom, then certainly he hath had private communion with God.

After Moses had enjoyed forty days' private communion with God in the mount, how did his heart rise, and his anger wax hot against the molten calf that his people had made! Exod. xxxii. 19, 20, 'And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing; and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount: and he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.' Moses had never more intimate fellowship with God than now, and he never discovered so much holy zeal, anger, and indignation against sin as now. When a man comes off from the mount of closet-duties with a greater hatred, anger, wrath, and indignation against bosom-sins, darling-sins, complexion-sins, that were once as dear to him as right hands or right eyes, or as Delilah was to Samson, or Herodias to Herod, or Isaac to Abraham, or Joseph to Jacob, then certainly he hath had communion with God in those duties. When a man finds his beloved sins, his Delilahs, which, like the prince of devils, command all other sins, to fall before his closet-duties, as Dagon fell before the ark, or as Goliath fell before David, then assuredly he hath had fellowship with God in them. Pliny writes of some families that had privy marks on their bodies, peculiar to those of that line.[1] Certainly, there are no families, no persons, but have some sin or sins, some privy marks on their souls, that may in a peculiar way be called theirs. Now when in private duties they find the bent of their hearts, and the purposes, resolutions, and inclinations of their souls more raised, inflamed, and set against these, they may safely and comfortably conclude, that they have had communion with God in them. O sirs! there is no

[1] Viz., The Tibareni and Mossyni, Nat. Hist. lib. vi. c. 4.—G.

no bosom-sin so sweet or profitable, that is worth burning in hell for, or worth shutting out of heaven for; and therefore, in all your private duties and services, labour after that communion with God in them, that may break the neck and heart of your most bosom-sins. When Darius fled before Alexander, that he might run the faster out of danger, he threw away his massy crown from his head. As ever you would be safe from eternal danger, throw away your golden and your silver idols, throw away your bosom-sins, your darling lusts.

And thus I have done with the answers to that noble and necessary question, that was last proposed.

(9.) My *ninth* advice and counsel is this, *In all your closet-duties look that your ends be right, look that the glory of God be your ultimate end, the mark, the white, that you have in your eye.* There is a great truth in that old saying, *Quod non actibus, sed finibus pensantur officia,* that duties are esteemed, not by their acts, but by their ends.[1] Look, as the shining sun puts out the light of the fire, so the glory of God must consume all other ends. There may be *malum opus in bona materia,* as in Jehu's zeal. Two things make a good Christian, good actions and good aims. And though a good aim doth not make a bad action good, as in Uzzah, yet a bad aim makes a good action bad, as in Jehu, whose justice was approved, but his policy punished. God writes a nothing upon all those services, wherein men's ends are not right: Jer. xxxii. 23, 'They obeyed not thy voice, neither walked in thy law, they have done nothing of all that thou hast commanded them to do.' So Dan. ix. 13, 'All this evil is come upon us, yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God.' The Jews were very much in religious duties and services; witness Isa. i. 11–15; Isa. lviii. 1–3; Zech. vii. 5, 6. I might produce a hundred more witnesses to confirm it, were it necessary; but because they did not aim at the glory of God in what they did, therefore the Lord writes a nothing upon all their duties and services. It was Ephraim's folly, that he brought forth fruit unto himself, Hos. x. 1. And it was the Pharisees' hypocrisy, that in all their duties and services they looked at the praise of men. Mat. vi. 1–5, 'Verily,' saith Christ, 'you have your reward.' A poor, a pitiful reward indeed! Such men shall be sure to fall short of divine acceptance, and of a glorious recompence, that are not able to look above the praises of men. Woe to that man that, with Augustus, is ambitious to go off the stage of duty with a *plaudit.*[2] Peter was not himself when he denied his Lord, and cursed himself to get credit amongst a cursed crew. As ever you would ask and have, speak and speed, seek and find, look that the glory of the Lord be engraven upon all your closet-duties. He shall be sure to speed best, whose heart is set most upon glorifying of God in all his secret retirements. When God crowns us, he doth but crown his own gifts in us; and when we give God the glory of all we do, we do but give him the glory that is due unto his name; for it is he, and he alone, that works all our works in us and for us. All closet-duties are good or bad, as the mark is at which the soul aims. He that makes

[1] *Christus opera nostra, non tam actibus quam finibus pensat.*—Zanchius.

[2] See more of this in my Treatise on Holiness, p. 157 to p. 168. [That is, his 'Crown and Glory of Christianity.' See it in Vol. IV.—G.]

God the object of closet-prayer, but not the end of closet-prayer, doth but lose his prayer, and take pains to undo himself. God will be *Alexander* or *Nemo;* he will be all in all, or he will be nothing at all. Such prayers never reach the ear of God, nor delight the heart of God, nor shall ever be lodged in the bosom of God, that are not directed to the glory of God. The end must be as noble as the means, or else a man may be undone after all his doings. A man's most glorious actions will at last be found to be but glorious sins, if he hath made himself, and not the glory of God, the end of those actions.

(10.) My *tenth* advice and counsel is this, *Be sure that you offer all your closet-prayers in Christ's name, and in his alone*; John xiv. 13, 14, 'And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.' John xv. 16, 'That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.' John xvi. 23, 24, 26, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say[1] unto you, that I will pray the Father for you.' O sirs! this is your privilege as well as your comfort, that you never deal with God but by a mediator. When you appear before God, Jesus Christ appears with you, and he appears for you; when you do *invocare*, then he doth *advocare;* when you put up your petitions, then he doth make intercession for you. Christ gives you a commission to put his name upon all your requests; and whatsoever prayer comes up with this name upon it, he will procure it an answer. In the state of innocency, man might worship God without a mediator; but since sin hath made so wide a breach between God and man, God will accept of no worship from man, but what is offered up by the hand of a mediator. Now this mediator is Christ alone; 1 Tim. ii. 5, 'For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.' One mediator, not of redemption only, as the papists grant, but of intercession also, which they deny.

The papists make saints and angels co-mediators with Christ; but in this, as in other things, they fight against clear Scripture light. The apostle plainly tells us, that the office of intercession pertaineth unto Christ, as part of his mediation, Heb. vii. 25: and it is certain, that we need no other master of requests in heaven, but the man Christ Jesus; who being so near to the Father, and so dear to the Father, and so much in with the Father, can doubtless carry any thing with the Father, that makes for his glory and our good. This was typified in the law. The high-priest alone did enter into the sanctuary, and carry the names of the children of Israel before the Lord, whilst the people stood all without; this pointed out Christ's mediation, Exod. xxviii. 29. In that Lev. xvi. 13, 14, you read of two things: first, of the cloud of incense that covered the mercy seat; secondly, of the blood of the bullock, that was sprinkled before the mercy-seat. Now that blood typified Christ's satisfaction, and the cloud of incense his intercession.

Some of the learned think, that Christ intercedes only by virtue of his merits; others, that it is done only with his mouth. I conjecture

[1] Qu. 'say not'?—ED.

it may be done both ways, the rather because Christ hath a tongue, as also a whole body, but glorified, in heaven; and is it likely, that that mouth which pleaded so much for us on earth, should be altogether silent for us in heaven?

There is no coming to the Father, but by the Son, John xiv. 6. Christ is the true Jacob's ladder, by which we must ascend to heaven. Joseph, you know, commanded his brethren, that as ever they looked for any good from him, or to see his face with joy, that they should be sure to bring their brother Benjamin along with them. O sirs! as ever you would be prevalent with God, as ever you would have sweet, choice, and comfortable returns from heaven to all your closet-prayers, be sure that you bring your elder brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the arms of your faith, be sure that you treat and trade with God only in the name of the Lord Jesus.

It is a notable speech that Luther hath upon the 130th Psalm, 'Often and willingly,' saith he, 'do I inculcate this, that you should shut your eyes, and your ears, and say, you know no God out of Christ, none but he that was in the lap of Mary, and sucked her breasts,' *Dulce nomen Christi.* He means none out of him. When you go to closet-prayer, look that you pray not in your own names, but in the name of Christ; and that you believe and hope not in your own names, but in the name of Christ; and that you look not to speed in your own names, but in the name of Christ: Col. iii. 17, 'And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.' Whatsoever we do, we are to do it by the authority of Christ, and through the assistance of Christ, and in the name of Christ, and for the sake and glory of Christ. Christ's name is so precious and powerful with the Father, that it will carry any suit, obtain any request at his hands. Jesus, in the China tongue, signifies the rising sun. When a man writes the name of Jesus upon his closet-prayers, then he shall be sure to speed. Though God will not give a man a drop, a sip, a crumb, a crust, for his own sake, yet for Jesus' sake he will give the best, the choicest, and the greatest blessings that heaven affords; that name is still mighty and powerful, prevalent and precious before the Lord. The prayers that were offered up with the incense upon the altar were pleasing, Rev. viii. 3; and came up with acceptance, ver. 4. Joseph's brethren were kindly used for Benjamin's sake. O sirs! all our duties and services are accepted of the Father, not for their own sakes, nor for our sakes, but for Christ's sake. There are no prayers that are either heard, owned, accepted, regarded, or rewarded, but such as Christ puts his hand to. If Christ doth not mingle his blood with our sacrifices, our services, they will be lost, and never ascend as incense before the Lord. No coin is current that hath not Cæsar's stamp upon it; nor no prayers go current in heaven, that have not the stamp of Christ upon them. There is nothing more pleasing to our heavenly Father, than to use the mediation of his Son. Such shall be sure to find most favour, and to speed best in the court of heaven, who still present themselves before the Father with Christ in their arms. But,

(11.) My *eleventh* and last advice and counsel is this, *When you come out of your closets, narrowly watch what becomes of your private prayers.* Look at what door, in what way, and by what hand the

Lord shall please to give you an answer to the secret desires of your souls in a corner. It hath been the custom of the people of God, to look after their prayers, to see what success they have had, to observe what entertainment they have found in heaven: Ps. v. 3, 'My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.' In the words you may observe two things: first, David's posture in prayer; secondly, his practice after prayer. First, His posture in prayer, 'I will direct my prayer unto thee.' Secondly, His practice after prayer, 'And I will look up.' The prophet, in these words, makes use of two military words. First, he would not only pray, but marshal up his prayers, he would put them in battle-array; so much the Hebrew word *gnarach* imports. Secondly, when he had done this, then he would be as a spy upon his watch-tower, to see whether he prevailed, whether he got the day or no; and so much the Hebrew word *tsaphah* imports. When David had set his prayers, his petitions, in rank and file, in good array, then he was resolved he would look abroad, he would look about him, to see at what door God would send in an answer of prayer. He is either a fool or a madman, he is either very weak or very wicked, that prays and prays, but never looks after his prayers; that shoots many an arrow towards heaven, but never minds where his arrows alight: Ps. lxxxv. 8, 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak; for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints.' If David would have God to hearken to his prayers, he must then hearken to what God will speak; and upon this point it seems he was fully resolved. The prophet's prayer you have in the seven first verses of this psalm, and his gracious resolution you have in the eighth verse, 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak.' As if he had said, 'Certainly it will not be long before the Lord will give me a gracious answer, a seasonable and a suitable return to my present prayers:' Ps. cxxx. 1, 2, 5, 6, 'Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice, let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning.' Those that watch abroad in dangerous times and tedious weather look frequently after peep of day. How doth the weary sentinel, that is wet with the rain of heaven or with the dew of the night, wait and watch, look and long, for the morning light. Now this was the frame and temper of David's spirit when he came off from praying; he falls a-waiting for a gracious answer. Shall the husbandman wait for the precious fruits of the earth, and shall the merchantman wait for the return of his ships, and shall the wife wait for the return of her husband, that is gone a long journey? James v. 7, 8, and shall not a Christian wait for the return of his prayers? Noah patiently waited for the return of the dove to the ark with an olive-branch in his mouth, so must you patiently wait for the return of your prayers. When children shoot their arrows, they never mind where they fall; but when prudent archers shoot their arrows up into the air, they stand and watch where they fall. You must deal by your prayers as prudent archers do by their arrows: Hab. ii. 1, 'I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what

he will say unto me.' The prophet, in the former chapter, having been very earnest in his expostulations, and very fervent in his supplications, he gets now upon his watch-tower, to see what becomes of his prayers. He stands as a sentinel, and watches as vigilantly and as carefully as a spy, a scout, earnestly longing to hear and see the event, the issue, and success of his prayers. That Christian that in prayer hath one eye upon a divine precept, and another upon a gracious promise, that Christian will be sure to look after his prayers. He that prays and waits, and waits and prays, shall be sure to speed; he shall never fail of rich returns, Ps. xl. 1–4. He that can want as well as wait, and he that can be contented that God is glorified, though he be not gratified; he that dares not antedate God's promises, but patiently wait for the accomplishment of them, he may be confident that he shall have seasonable and suitable answers to all those prayers that he hath posted away to heaven. Though God seldom comes at our time, yet he never fails to come at his own time: 'He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry,' Heb. x. 37. The mercies of God are not styled the *swift*, but the '*sure* mercies of David.' He that makes as much conscience to look after his prayers as to pray, he shall shortly clap his hands for joy, and cry out with that blessed martyr, 'He is come, Austin, he is come, he is come.'[1] Certainly there is little worth in that man's heart, or in that man's prayers, who keeps up a trade of prayer, but never looks what becomes of his prayers. When you are in your closets, marshal your prayers; see that every prayer keeps his place and ground; and when you come out of your closets, then look up for an answer; only take heed that you be not too hasty and hot with God. Though mercy in the promise be yours, yet the time of giving it out is the Lord's; and therefore you must wait as well as pray.

And thus much by way of counsel and advice, for the better carrying on of closet prayer.

I have now but one thing more to do before I shut up this discourse, and that is, to lay down some means, rules, or directions that may be of use to help you on in a faithful and conscientious discharge of this great duty, viz. closet-prayer. And therefore thus,

(1.) *First*, As ever you would give up yourselves to private prayer, *Take heed of an idle and slothful spirit.* If Adam, in the state of innocency, must work and dress the garden, and if, after his fall, when he was monarch of all the world, he must yet labour, why should any be idle or slothful? Idleness is a sin against the law of creation. God creating man to labour, the idle person violates this law of creation; for by his idleness he casts off the authority of his Creator, who made him for labour. Idleness is a contradiction to the principles of our creation.[2] Man in innocency should have been freed from weariness, but not from employment; he was to dress the garden by divine appointment: 'And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it,' Gen. ii. 15. All weariness in labour, and all vexing, tiring, and tormenting labour, came in by the fall: 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,' Gen. iii. 19. The bread of idleness is neither sweet nor sure: 'An idle person shall suffer hunger,'

[1] Mr Glover [Foxe] Acts and Mon. [*sub nomine*; also Clarke, as before.—G.]
[2] August. de Gen. ad lit., lib. viii. cap. 8.

saith Solomon, Prov. xix. 15. An idle life and an holy heart are far enough asunder. By doing nothing, saith the heathen man, men learn to do evil things. It is easy slipping out of an idle life into an evil and wicked life; yea, an idle life is of itself evil, for man was made to be active, not to be idle. The Cyclops thought man's happiness did consist *in nihil agendo*, in doing nothing; but no excellent thing can be the child of idleness. Idleness is a mother-sin, a breeding-sin; it is *pulvinar diaboli*, the devil's cushion, on which he sits, and the devil's anvil, on which he frames very great and very many sins, Eph. iv. 28, 2 Thes. iii. 10, 12. Look, as toads and serpents breed most in standing waters, so sin thrives most in idle persons. Idleness is that which provokes the Lord to forsake men's bodies, and the devil to possess their souls.

No man hath less means to preserve his body, and more temptations to infect his soul, than an idle person. Oh shake off sloth! The sluggish Christian will be sleeping, or idling, or trifling, when he should be in his closet a-praying. Sloth is the green-sickness of the soul; get it cured, or it will be your eternal bane. Of all devils, it is the idle devil that keeps men most out of their closets. There is nothing that gives the devil so much advantage against us as idleness. It was good counsel that Jerome gave to his friend, *Facito aliquid operis, ut te semper diabolus inveniat occupatum*, that when the devil comes with a temptation, you may answer him you are not at leisure.[1]

It was the speech of Mr Greenham, sometimes[2] a famous and painful preacher of this nation, that when the devil tempted a poor soul, she came to him for advice how she might resist the temptation, and he gave her this answer: 'Never be idle, but be always well employed, for in my own experience I have found it. When the devil came to tempt me, I told him that I was not at leisure to hearken to his temptations, and by this means I resisted all his assaults.' Idleness is the hour of temptation, and an idle person is the devil's tennis-ball, tossed by him at his pleasure.

'He that labours,' said the old hermit, 'is tempted but by one devil, but he that is idle is assaulted by all.' Cupid complained that he could never fasten upon the Muses, because he could never find them idle. The fowler bends his bow and spreads his net for birds when they are set, not when they are upon the wing. So Satan shoots his most fiery darts at men, when they are most idle and slothful. And this the Sodomites found by woful experience, Ezek. xvi. 49, when God rained hell out of heaven upon them, both for their idleness, and for those other sins of theirs, which their idleness did expose them to.

It was said of Rome, that during the time of their wars with Carthage and other enemies in Africa, they knew not what vice meant; but no sooner had they got the conquest, but through idleness they came to ruin. Idleness is a sin, not only against the law of grace, but also against the light of nature. You cannot look any way but every creature checks and upbraids your idleness and sloth; if you look up to the heavens, there you shall find all their glorious lights constant in their motions, 'The sun rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race,' Ps. xix. 5, civ. 23; the winds blow, the waters run, the earth brings forth her pleasant and de-

[1] Jerome, Ep. 4.
[2] Some time. Greenham's Works form a rich folio (1601). He died 1591.—G.

lightful fruits, all the fish in the sea, fowls in the air, and beasts in the fields and on the mountains, have their motions and operations, all which call aloud upon man not to be idle, but active. Solomon sends the sluggard to the ant to learn industry, Prov. vi. 6. The ant is a very little creature, but exceeding laborious. Nature hath put an instinct into her to be very busy and active all the summer; she is early and late at it, and will not lose an hour unless the weather hinder. And the prophet Jeremiah sends the Jews to school to learn to wait, and observe of the stork, the turtle, the crane, and the swallow, Jer. viii. 7. And our Saviour sends us to the sparrows and lilies, to learn attendance upon providence, Mat. vi. 26, 28. And let me send you to the busy bee, to learn activity and industry; though the bee be little in bulk, yet it is great in service; she flies far, examines the fields, hedges, trees, orchards, gardens, and loads herself with honey and wax, and then returns to her hive. Now how should the activity of these creatures put the idle person to a blush. O sirs! man is the most noble creature, into whom God hath put principles of the greatest activity, as capable of the greatest and highest enjoyments; and therefore idleness is a forgetting man's dignity, and a forsaking of that rank that God hath set him in, and a debasing of himself below the least and meanest creatures, who constantly in their order obedientially serve the law of their creation. Nay, if you look up to the blessed angels above you, you shall still find them active and serviceable; 'are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' Heb. i. 14. And if you look down to the angels of darkness below you, oh how laborious and industrious are they to destroy and damn your precious and immortal souls! 1 Peter v. 8.

For a close, remember that idleness is so great an evil, that it hath been condemned and severely punished by the very worst of men. Among the Egyptians, idleness was a capital crime. Among the Lucans,[1] he that lent money to an idle person was to lose it. By Solon's law, idle persons were to suffer death; and Seneca had rather be sick than idle. The Lacedæmonians called men to an account for their idle hours. Among the Corinthians, idle persons were delivered to the *Carnifex*. Antoninus Pius, being emperor, caused the roofs and coverings of all such houses to be taken away, as were known to receive in idle people, affirming that nothing was more uncomely, or absurd to be suffered, than such idle caterpillars and slow-worms to have their food and nourishment from that commonwealth, in the maintenance of which there was no supply from their industry and labour. All which should steel us and arm us against sloth and idleness. I have the longer insisted on this, because there is not a greater hindrance to closet prayer than sloth and idleness. Slothful and idle persons commonly lie so long a-bed, and spend so much precious time between the comb and the glass, and in eating, drinking sporting, and trifling, &c., that they can find no time for private prayer. Certainly such as had rather go sleeping to hell, than sweating to heaven, will never care much for closet-prayer. And therefore shun sloth and idleness, as you would shun a lion in the way, or poison in your meat, or coals in your bosom, or else you will never find time to wait upon God in your closets.

[1] Qu. 'Lucanians'?—G.

(2.) *Secondly, Take heed of spending too much of your precious time about circumstantials, about the little things of religion, as 'mint, anise, and cummin,'* Mat. xxiii. 23, *or in searching into the circumstances of worship, or in standing stoutly for this or that ceremony, and in the mean while neglect the studying of the covenant of grace, or about inquiring what fruit that was that Adam ate in paradise, or in inquiring after the authors of such and such books, whose names God in his infinite wisdom hath concealed, or in inquiring what God did before the world was made.* When one asked Austin that question, he answered, 'that he was preparing hell for such busy questionists as he was.' It was a saying of Luther, 'From a vainglorious doctor, from a contentious pastor, and from unprofitable questions, the good Lord deliver his church.' It is one of Satan's great designs to hinder men in the great and weighty duties of religion, by busying them most about the lowest and least matters of religion. Satan is never better pleased, than when he sees Christians puzzled and perplexed about those things in religion that are of no great moment or importance, Col. ii. 21. Such as negotiate and trade in religion more for a good name than a good life, for a good report than a good conscience, for to humour others than to honour God, &c., such will take no pleasure in closet-duties. Such as are more busied about ceremonies than substances, about the form of godliness than the power, 2 Tim. iii. 5, such will never make it their business to be much with God in their closets, as is evident in the Scribes and Pharisees, Mat. vi. 1–6. Such as are more taken up with the outward dress and garb of religion, than they are with the spirit, power, and life of religion: such will never affect to drive a secret trade heavenwards, Luke xi. 34–40. There cannot be a surer nor a greater character of an hypocrite, than to make a great deal of stir about little things in religion, and in the mean while neglect the great and main things in religion. Such as these have all along in the Scripture discovered a strangeness, and a perfect carelessness as to closet duties. I never knew any man hot and zealous about circumstantials, about the little things of religion, that was ever famous for closet prayer. But,

(3.) *Thirdly, Take heed of curiosity, and of spending too much of your precious time in searching into those dark, abstruse, mysterious, and hidden truths and things of God and religion, that lie most remote from the understanding of the best and wisest of men.* Curiosity is the spiritual adultery of the soul. Curiosity is a spiritual drunkenness; for look, as the drunkard is never satisfied unless he see the bottom of the cup, be it never so deep, so those that are troubled with the itch of curiosity, will say they can never be satisfied till they come to the bottom of the most deep and profound things of God; they love to pry into God's secrets, and to scan the mysteries of religion, by their weak, shallow reason, and to be wise above what is written. Curious searchers into the deep mysterious things of God will make all God's depths to be shallows, rather than they will be thought not able to fathom them by the short line of their own reason. Oh that men would once learn to be contentedly ignorant, where God would not have them knowing! Oh that men were once so humble, as to account it no disparagement to them, to acknowledge some depths in God, and

in the blessed Scripture, which their shallow reason cannot fathom! They are only a company of fools *in folio*, that affect to know more than God would have them. Did not Adam's tree of knowledge make him and his posterity mere fools? He that goes to school to his own reason, hath a fool for his schoolmaster. The ready way to grow stark blind is to be still prying and gazing upon the body of the sun: so the ready way to spiritual blindness is to be still prying into the most secret and hidden things of God, Deut. xxix. 29. Are there not many who, by prying long into the secrets of nature, are become arch-enemies to the grace of God? Rom. ix. 20. Oh that we were wise to admire those deep mysteries which we cannot understand, and to adore those depths and counsels which we cannot reach, Rom. xi. 33. Oh let us check our curiosity in the things of God, and sit down satisfied and contented to resolve many of God's actions into some hidden causes which lie secret in the abyss of his eternal knowledge and infallible will. Christ, when he was on earth, very frequently, severely, and sharply condemned curious inquirers, as is evident by the scriptures in the margin;[1] and the great reason why our Saviour did so frequently check this humour of curiosity, was because the great indulgers of it were too frequent neglecters of the more great, necessary, and important points of religion. Curiosity is one of Satan's most dangerous engines, by which he keeps many souls out of their closets, yea, out of heaven. When many a poor soul begins in good earnest to look towards heaven, and to apply himself to closet duties, then Satan begins to bestir himself, and to labour with all his might, so to busy the poor soul with vain inquiries, and curious speculations, and unprofitable curiosities, that the soul hath no time for closet prayer. Ah! how well might it have been with many a man, had he but spent one quarter of that time in closet prayer, that he hath spent in curious inquiries after things that have not been fundamental to his happiness.

The heathenish priests affected curiosity, they had their *mythologies*, and strange canting expressions of their imaginary inaccessible deities, to amaze and amuse their blind superstitious followers, and thereby to hold up their popish and apish idolatries in greater veneration. Oh that there were none of this heathenish spirit among many in these days, who have their faces toward heaven! Ah! how many are there that busy themselves more in searching after the reasons of the irrecoverableness of man's fall, than they do to recover themselves out of their fallen estate! Ah, how many are there that busy themselves more about the apostasy of the angels, than they do about securing their interest in Christ! And what a deal of precious time have some spent in discovering the natures, distinctions, properties, and orders of angels.[2]

That high-soaring, counterfeit Dionysius describes the hierachy of angels as exactly as if he had dwelt among them. He saith there are nine orders of them, which he grounds upon nine words, which are found partly in the Old Testament, and partly in the New; as seraphims,

[1] John xxi. 22, Acts i. 6, 7.

[2] Peter Martyr saith, that to inquire of the angels accurately and subtilly, is *magis ad curiositatem nostram, quam ad salutem;* and he wisheth that the schoolmen in their knotty, thorny, and unprofitable discourses had observed this.

cherubims, thrones, powers, hosts, dominions, principalities, archangels, and angels; and at large he describes their several natures, distinctions, and properties, as that the first three orders are for immediate attendance on the Almighty, and the next three orders for the general government of the creatures, and the last three orders for the particular good of God's elect; that the archangel surpasses the beauty of angels ten times, principalities surpass the archangels twenty times, and that powers surpass the principalities forty times, &c. How he came by this learning is not known, and yet this hierarchy in these nine several orders hath passed for current through many ages of the church.

The Platonics were the first that divided the angels into three orders, as, some above heaven, called *supercœlestes;* others in heaven, called *cœlestes;* and others under heaven, called *subcœlestes,* and accordingly they assign them several offices. As,

First, They above heaven, I mean this visible heaven, continually stand before God, as they say, praising, and lauding, and magnifying of his name.

Secondly, They in heaven are there seated to move, and rule, and govern the stars.

Thirdly, They under heaven are, some to rule kingdoms, others provinces, others cities, others particular men.

Several Christian writers, that have written on the hierarchy of angels, follow these opinions. Now, if we should take these surmises for real truths, then it will follow, that the highest angels do not minister to the saints, but only and immediately to God himself, which is expressly contrary to several scriptures, as you may see by them in the margin among others.[1] When I was upon the ministration of the blessed angels, I did then prove in several exercises, as some of you may remember, 'that all the angels in heaven were commanded and commissionated by God to be serviceable and useful to the heirs of salvation. Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' The devil knows he is no loser, and the curious soul but a very little gainer, if he can but persuade him to spend most of his precious time in studying and poring upon the most dark, mysterious, and hidden things of God. He that affects to read the Revelation of John more than his plain epistles, or Daniel's prophecies more than David's Psalms, and is more busy about reconciling difficult scriptures than he is about mortifying of unruly lusts, or that is set more upon vain speculations than upon things that make most for edification, he is not the man that is cut out for closet-prayer. Such as affect sublime notions, obscure expressions, and are men of abstracted conceits, are but a company of wise fools, that will never take any delight to be with God in a corner. Had many men spent but half that time in secret prayer, that they have spent in seeking after the philosopher's stone, how happy might they have been! Oh how holy, how happy, how heavenly, how humble, how wise, how knowing, might many men have been, had they spent but half that time in closet prayer, that they have spent in searching after those things that are hard to be understood! 2 Peter iii. 16. But,

(4.) *Fourthly, Take heed of engaging yourselves in a crowd of*

[1] Jude 9; Luke i, 19, 26; Zech. iv. 10; Rev. v. 6; Heb. i. 14.

worldly businesses. Many have so much to do on earth that they have no time to look up to heaven. As much earth puts out the fire, so much worldly business puts out the fire of heavenly affections. Look, as the earth swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, Num. xxii. 32; so much worldly business swallows up so much precious time, that many men have no leisure to be with God in their closets. This business is to be done, and that business cannot be omitted, and the other necessary occasion must be attended, so that I have no leisure to step out of my shop into my closet, saith the earthly-minded man, Philip. iii. 19. Thus a crowd of worldly businesses crowds closet-prayer quite out of doors. Many drive so great a trade in their shops, that their private trade to heaven is quite laid by. There is nothing that hath kept men more from Christ and closet-prayer, than the shop, the exchange, the farm, and the oxen, &c., Luke xiv. 16–22. The stars which have least circuit are nearest the pole; and men that are least perplexed with worldly businesses are commonly nearest to God, to Christ, to heaven, and so the fitter for closet-prayer. It is sad when men grasp so much business, that they can have no leisure for communion with God in a corner. The noise is such in a mill, as hinders all private intercourse between man and man; and so a multitude of worldly businesses make such a noise, as that it hinders all private intercourse between God and the soul. If a man of much business should now and then slide into his closet, yet his head and his heart will be so filled and distracted with the thoughts of his employments, that God shall have little of him but his bodily presence, or, at most, but bodily exercise, which profits little, 1 Tim. iv. 8. If Christ blamed Martha, Luke x. 40–42, for the multitude of her domestical employments, though they were undertaken for the immediate service and entertainment of himself, because they hindered her in her soul-concernments, oh how will he one day blame all those who, by running themselves into a crowd of worldly businesses, do cut themselves off from all opportunities of pouring out their souls before him in secret. But,

(5.) *Fifthly, Take heed of secret sins.* There is no greater hindrance to secret prayer in all the world than secret sins; and therefore stand upon your watch, and arm yourselves with all your might against them. There is an antipathy betwixt secret sinning and secret praying, partly from guilt, which makes the soul shy of coming under God's secret eye; and partly from those fears, doubts, disputes, and disorders, that secret sins raise in the heart. Light is not more opposite to darkness, Christ to Belial, nor heaven to hell, than secret prayer is to secret sins; and therefore, whatever you do, look that you keep clear of secret sins. To that purpose consider these four things:

[1.] *First, That God is privy to our most secret sins.*[1] His eye is as much upon secret sins, as it is upon open sins: Ps. xc. 8, 'Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.' God hath an eye upon our inmost evils, he seeth all that is done in the dark: Jer. xxiii. 24, 'Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord: do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.' Prov. xv. 3, 'The eyes of the Lord are in every

[1] Ps. cxxxix. 1–4; Jer. xiii. 27, and xxix. 23; Ps. xxxix. 1; 1 Kings xx. 39; Job x. 12.

place, beholding the evil and the good.' To say that God doth not see the most secret sins of the children of men, is not only derogatory to his omniscience, but also to his mercy; for how can God pardon those sins, which he doth not see to be sins? There is no cloud, nor curtain, nor moment of darkness, that can stand betwixt the eyes of God and the ways of men: Prov. v. 21, 'The ways of men are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.' In this scripture Solomon mainly speaks of the ways of the adulterer, which usually are plotted with the most cunning secresy; yet God seeth all those ways. Look, as no boldness can exempt the adulterer from the justice of God, so no secresy can hide him from the eye of God. Though men labour to hide their ways from others, and from themselves, yet it is but labour in vain to endeavour to hide them from God. Men that labour to hide God from themselves, can never hide themselves from God.

I have read that Paphnutius converted Thais and Ephron, two famous strumpets, from uncleanness, only with this argument, 'That God seeth all things in the dark, when the doors are fast, the windows shut, and the curtains drawn.'[1] Heb. iv. 13, 'Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened (anatomised) even to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.' It is an allusion to the priests under the law, who, when they killed a beast, all things that were within the beast were laid open and naked before the priest, that he might see what was sound and what was corrupted. Though evil be done out of the eye of all the world, yet it is naked and manifest in his sight with whom we have to do.

Those sins which lie closest and are most secretly lurking in the heart, are as obvious and odious to God as those that are most fairly written upon a man's forehead. God is *πανόφθαλμος, all eye;* so that he sees all, the most secret turnings and windings of our hearts. Our most secret sins are as plainly seen by him, as any thing can be by us at noonday: Ps. cxxxix. 11, 12, 'If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.' It is not the thickest clouds that can bar out his observance, whose eyes fill heaven and earth. What is the curtain, or the darkest night, or the double lock, or the secret chamber, to him who clearly observes all things in a perfect nakedness. God hath an eye upon the most inward intentions of the heart, and the most subtle motions of the spirit. Those philosophers were out, that held the eye and ear of God descended no lower than the heavens. Certainly there is not a creature, not a thought, not a thing, but lies open to the all-seeing eye of God. The Lord knows our secret sinnings as exactly as our visible sinnings: Ps. xliv. 21, 'He knoweth the secrets of our hearts.' Would not a malefactor speak truly at the bar, did he know, did he believe that the judge had windows that did look into his breast?

Athenodorus, a heathen, could say, that all men ought to be careful in the actions of their life, because God was everywhere, and beheld all that was done.

Zeno, a wise heathen, affirmed that God beheld even the thoughts.

[1] See Index for other references to this.—G.

It was an excellent saying of Ambrose, 'If thou canst not hide thyself from the sun, which is God's minister of light, how impossible will it be to hide thyself from him, whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun.'[1] Though a sinner may baffle his conscience, yet he cannot baffle the eye of God's omnisciency. Oh! that poor souls would remember, that as they are never out of the reach of God's hand, so they are never from under the view of his eye. God is *totus oculus*, all eye. Jer. xvi. 17, 'For mine eyes are upon all their ways; they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes.' Job xxxiv. 21, 22, 'For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.' Jer. xxxii. 19, 'For thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to his ways, and the fruit of his doings.' You know what Ahasuerus, that great monarch, said concerning Haman, when coming in he found him cast upon the queen's bed, on which she sat, 'What,' saith he, 'will he force the queen before me in the house?' Esth. vii. 8. There was the killing emphasis in the words *before me;* 'will he force the queen before me?' what, will he dare to commit such villany, and I stand and look on? O sirs! to sin in the sight of God, to do wickedly under the eye of God, is a thing that he looks upon as the greatest affront, and as the highest indignity that can possibly be done unto him. What, saith he, wilt thou be drunk before me? Wilt thou swear and blaspheme before me? Wilt thou be wanton and unclean before me? Wilt thou be unjust and unrighteous under mine eye? Wilt thou profane my Sabbaths, and pollute my ordinances before my face? Wilt thou despise and persecute my servants in my presence? &c. This, then, is the killing aggravation of all sin, that it is done before the face of God, that it is committed in the royal presence of the King of kings; whereas the very consideration of God's omnipresence should bravely arm us against sin and Satan; the consideration of his all-seeing eye should make us shun all occasions of sin, and make us shy of all appearances of sin. Shall the eye of the master keep the scholar from blotting his copy? Shall the eye of the judge keep the malefactor from picking and stealing? Shall the eye of the master keep the servant from idling and trifling? Shall the eye of the father keep the child from wandering and gadding? Shall the eye of the husband keep the wife from extravagancies and indecencies? Shall the sharp eye of wise Cato, or the quick eye of a near neighbour, or the severe eye of a bosom-friend, keep thee from many enormities and vanities? And shall not the strict, the pure, the jealous eye of an all-seeing God, keep thee from sinning in the secret chamber, when all curtains are drawn, doors bolted, and every one in the house a-bed or abroad but thee and thy Delilah? Oh! what dreadful atheism is bound up in that man's heart, who is more afraid of the eye of his father, his pastor, his child, his servant, than he is of the eye, the presence of the eternal God? Oh! that all whom this concerns, would take such serious notice of it, as to judge themselves severely for it, as to mourn bitterly over it, as to strive mightily in prayer with God both for the pardon of it, and for power against it.

The apostle sadly complains of some in his time who wallowed in

[1] Ambrose, *Offic.* lib. i. cap. xiv.

secret sins. Eph. v. 12, 'For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.' He speaks of such as lived in secret fornications and uncleanness. There were many that had put on a form of godliness, who yet did allow themselves in the secret actings of abominable wickedness and filthiness, as if there were no God to behold them, nor conscience to accuse them, nor judgment-day to arraign them, nor justice to condemn them, nor hell to torment them. Oh! how infinitely odious must they be in the eyes of a holy God, who can highly court and compliment him in public, and yet are so bold as to provoke him to his face in private. These are like those whores, who pretend a great deal of affection and respect to their husbands abroad, and yet at home will play the harlots before their husbands' eyes.

Such as perform religious duties only to cloak and colour over their secret filthinesses, their secret wickednesses; such as pretend to pay their vows, and yet wait for the twilight, Prov. vii. 13–15, Job xxiv. 15; such as commit wickedness in a corner, and yet with the harlot wipe their mouths, and say, What have we done? such shall at last find the chambers, the stones out of the wall, the beam out of the timber, the seats they sit on, and the beds they lie on, to witness against all their wanton dalliances, and lascivious carriages in secret, Hab. ii. 11. Heb. xiii. 4, 'Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.' He will sentence them himself; and why? but because such sinners carry it so closely and craftily, that oftentimes none but God can find them out. Magistrates often neglect the punishing of such sinners, when their secret wickedness is made known; and therefore God himself will sit in judgment upon them. Though they may escape the eyes of men, yet they shall never escape the judgment of God. Heart iniquities fall not under any human sentence. Usually whoremongers and adulterers are marvellous close, and secret and subtle to conceal their abominable filthiness; therefore the harlot is said to be subtle of heart, Prov. vii. 10. The Hebrew by Rabbi Solomon[1] is translated *munito corde*, and having her heart fenced; 'For,' saith he, 'as a city is environed with fortifications, so her heart is fortified round about with subtilty.' Or else it may be rendered *occlusa corde*, 'fast shut up in the heart, even as close as a besieged city,' that is, 'most secret in the subtilty of her heart, how open soever she be in the boldness of her outward carriage.' So the prophet Agur reckoneth the way of a man with a maid, and the way of an adulterous woman, among those things which neither himself nor any other man was possibly able to discover and find out, and compares it to the way of three things, which no wit nor industry of man is able to descry; but yet God seeth all, and will bring them to the bar for all, Prov. xxx. 19, 20. But,

[2.] *Secondly*, Consider *that secret sins shall be revealed.*[2] The most hidden works of darkness shall be openly manifested; for though the actings of sin be in the dark, yet the judgings of sin shall be in the light; Luke viii. 17, 'For nothing is secret that shall not be made

[1] Rab. Sol. *in hunc vers.*

[2] In my treatise called 'Apples of Gold,' &c., I have proved by many arguments that the sins of the saints shall not be brought into the judgment of discussion and discovery in the great day, pp. 155 to 172, and therefore understand this second particular of such who live and die in their secret sins without repentance and faith in the blood of Christ. Apples of Gold,' as contained in Vol. I.—G.]

manifest; neither anything hid, that shall not be known, and come abroad.' The slanders of the Jews concerning the magical arts of Christ and his apostles, the horrible lies of the pagans concerning the incestuous copulations of the Christians, and their drinking man's blood, were in time discovered what they were: Eccles. xii. 14, 'God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.' Mark, he doth not say some work, but *every* work; and not only works, but *secrets;* and not only secrets, but *every* secret; and not only secret good things but *evil* too; whether good works or ill works, whether secret or open, all must be brought to judgment. The books of God's omniscience, and man's conscience, shall then be opened, and then secret sins shall be as legible in thy forehead, as if they were written with the most glittering sun-beams upon a wall of crystal. All men's secret sins are printed in heaven, and God will at last read them aloud in the ears of all the world: 1 Cor. iv. 5, 'Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart.' Look, as there are a world of flies and motes in the air, which we never see till the sun shines; so there are many thousand thousands of proud thoughts, and unclean thoughts, and worldly thoughts, and malicious thoughts, and envious thoughts, and bloody thoughts, &c., which the world sees not, knows not; but in the great day, when the counsels of all hearts shall be manifest, then all shall out, then all shall appear, both to the upper and the lower world. In the great day all masks, vizards, and hoods shall be pulled off, and then all shall out; all that ever thou hast done in the secret chamber, in the dark corner, shall be made known to men and angels, yea, to the whole court of heaven, and to all the world beside. Rom. ii. 16, 'In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.' In this great day, God will judge not only our words but our works, not only our open works, but also our secret works and ways. When Jehoiakim was dead, there was found the characters, superstitious marks, and prints of his sorcery upon his body, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 8; which shews how deeply idolatry was rooted in his heart, seeing he bare the marks in his flesh during his life. He being a king bore it out bravely, and kept all close; but when he was dead, then all came out, then the marks of his abominable idolatry appeared upon his body. Though sinners, though the greatest of sinners, may hide and keep close their horrid abominations for a time, yet there will come a time when all shall out, when all their secret marks and secret abominations shall be obvious to all the world.

But sinners may be ready to object and say, 'Let us but alone in our secret sins till that day, and then we shall do well enough.' And therefore in the,

[3.] *Third* place, consider, *That God many times doth, even in this life, discover and make known to the world men's secret sins,* Isa. xli. 21–23.

God loves to act suitable to his own names. Now, to be a revealer of secrets, is one of his names, Dan. ii. 47; and accordingly, even in this world, he often brings to light the most hidden things of darkness. Of all the glorious attributes of God, there is none that suffers so deeply

by secret sins, as the attribute of his omniscience; and therefore in this world God often stands up to vindicate the honour of that attribute, by unmasking of sinners, and by bringing to the light all those secret paths and ways of wickedness, wherein they have long walked undiscovered. It was for the honour of this blessed attribute of God, that the secret-plotted sin of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v. 1–12, was so openly discovered; 'And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.' Joseph's brethren for a long time hid their malice, their craft, their cruelty, their envy, their treachery, in selling their brother into Egypt; but at last by amazing and amusing[1] providences, all was brought to light, Gen. xlii. 21, 22; Chap. l. 15–22. Conscience, that for a time may seem to be asleep, yet will in time awake, and make the sinner know, that he is as faithful in recording, as he is fearful in accusing; and this Joseph's brethren found by sad experience. So Gehazi, he sins secretly, he lies fearfully, and after all he defends it stoutly; but at last all comes out, and instead of being clothed richly, he and his posterity was clothed with a leprosy for ever; and instead of two changes of garments, God hangs them up in chains, as a monument of his wrath to all generations, 2 Kings v. 20, *seq.* So Achan secretly and sacrilegiously steals a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels' weight, and hides them in the earth in the midst of his tent, and by reason of this, Israel flies before their enemies; but at last Achan is taken, and all comes out, and his golden wedge proved a wedge to cleave him, and his Babylonish garment a garment to shroud him. Joshua makes a bonfire of all that he had secretly and sinfully stolen, and burns him, and his children, and all that he had, in it. Oh how openly, how severely doth God sometimes punish men for their most secret iniquity! The same you may see in that great instance of David; 2 Sam. xii. 9-12, 'Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword' (this was done in a secret letter), 'and hast taken his wife to be thy wife. Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from thy house, because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thy eyes and give them to thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of the sun. For thou didst it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.' 2 Sam. xvi. 22. David was very studious and very industrious to hide his sin, and to save his credit; but the covering made of Uriah's blood was too short, and too narrow to hide his folly with Bathsheba, and therefore when he had done all he could, his sin was tossed like a ball, from man to man, through court, city, and country.

I have read of one Parthenius, an homicide, treasurer to Theodobert king of France, who, having traitorously slain an especial friend of his called Ausonius, with his wife Papianillæ, when no man suspected or accused him thereof, he detected and accused himself after this strange

[1] See Glossary for other examples of this peculiar use of 'amuse:' common to contemporary literature.—G.

manner: as he slept in his bed, suddenly he roared out most pitifully, crying for help, or else he perished; and being demanded what he ailed, he, half asleep, answered, 'That his friend Ausonius and his wife, whom he had slain long ago, summoned him to judgment before God.' Upon which confession he was apprehended; and, after due examination, stoned to death.[1] Thus the terrors and horrors of his own conscience discovers that secret wickedness which none could prove against him.

I have read[2] how that Mahomet the great Turk had with great rewards procured two Turks to undertake to kill Scanderbeg. These traitors came to Scanderbeg, making such a show of the detestation both of Mahomet's tyrannical government and vain superstition, that they were both by Scanderbeg and others reputed to be indeed the men they desired to be accounted; and so after they had learned the principles of the Christian religion, they were both, by their own desire, baptized. Soon after, by a providence, it so fell out that these two traitors fell at variance betwixt themselves, by which means the plot came to be discovered; and after due examination and confession of the fact, they were presently condemned and executed.

Conscience is God's spy in the bosom.[3] Conscience, as a scribe, a register, sits in the closet of your hearts, with pen in hand, and makes a diurnal of all your secret ways and secret crimes, which are above the cognizance of men. Conscience sets down the time when, the place where, the manner how, and the persons with whom such and such secret wickednesses have been committed; and that so clear and evident, that, go where you will, and do what you can, the characters of them shall never be cancelled or razed out till God appear in judgment. Let a man sin in the closest retirement that human policy can contrive, let him take all the ways he can to hide his sins, to cloak and cover his sin, as Adam did, yet conscience will so play the judge, that it will bring in the evidence, produce the law, urge the penalty, and pass the sentence of condemnation upon him. There is many a man who makes a fair profession, and who hath a great name in the world, who yet is αυτοκαταχριτος, self-condemned, for those secret sins which are not obvious to the eyes of man, nor punishable by the hands of men; yea, many times in this life God raiseth such a hell of horror and terror in many men's consciences, by reason of their secret sins, that they can have no rest nor quiet, neither at bed nor at board, neither lying down nor rising up. Fain would they conceal their sins, unwilling they are that the world should know how vile they have been in secret; but conscience being upon the rack, and still a-gnawing, accusing, and condemning of them, they can hold no longer. Now all must out; and now those sins that were most secret and concealed, come to be published upon the house-top.

Some that have been under anguish of conscience, others that have been smitten with a frenzy, and many in their very sleep, have been

[1] Beard's 'Theatre of God's Judgments:' Wanley, as before, lib. ii. cap. x.—G.

[2] [Knolles'] Turk. Hist. fol. 400.

[3] Conscience, saith Philo, is the little consistory of the soul. Conscience is *mille testes*, a thousand witnesses, for or against a man. Conscience is a court of record, and whatsoever it sees it writes down; and conscience is always as quick in writing as the sinner can be in sinning. The very heathen could say that conscience was a god to every man.

often the blazers and proclaimers of their own secret filthiness and wickedness. In those cases God hath made many a secret sinner cry out with the leper, 'Unclean, unclean,' Lev. xiii. 45; and with Judas, before all present, 'I have sinned, I have sinned,' Mat. xxvii. 4. Many times in this life God doth very strangely and wonderfully discover those secret works of darkness in which persons have lived long undiscovered.

A Pythagorean bought a pair of shoes upon trust; the shoemaker dies, he is glad, thinks them gained; but a while after his conscience flies upon him, and becomes a continual chider and tormentor of him. He hereupon repairs to the house of the dead, casts in his money with these words, 'There, take thy due; thou livest to me, though dead to all besides.' But,

[4.] *Fourthly,* Consider *that secret sins are in some respects more dangerous than open sins.* Many a man bleeds to death inwardly, and no man perceives it. The more inward and secret the disease is, the more the man is in danger to lose his life. There are no fevers so dangerous as those that prey upon the spirits and inward parts; so there are no sins so dangerous and pernicious to the souls of men as those that are most inward and secret. Secret sins often reign in the souls of men most powerfully when least apparently.

First, Consider *that he that sins secretly deprives himself of those helps and remedies which, by a divine blessing, might arm him against sin, yea, make him victorious over sin;* to wit, the prayers, counsels, reproofs, examples, and encouragements of friends, relations, &c. A man's house may be on fire, but whilst it is all inward, help comes not in; but when the fire flames out, when it catcheth the outside of the house, then help runs in, then help on all hands is ready. He that sins in secret debars himself of all public remedy, and takes great pains to damn his soul in a corner, and to go to hell in the dark. But,

Secondly, Secret sins will make way for public sins. He that makes no conscience of sinning in the secret chamber, will ere long, with Absalom, be ready to spread a tent upon the top of the house, and to go in to his concubines in the sight of all Israel, 2 Sam. xii. 11. Such as have made no conscience of stealing a few pins or pence or a few shillings in private, have in time come to be so bold as to take a purse on the road at high noon. The cockatrice must be crushed in the egg, else it will soon become a serpent. The very thought of sin, if not[1] thought on, will break forth into action, action into custom, custom into habit, and then both body and soul are irrecoverably lost to all eternity.

If Satan can but wound our heel, as the poets feign of Achilles, he will make a hard shift but he will send death from the heel to the heart. If this subtle serpent can but wriggle in his tail by an ill thought, he will soon get in his head by a worse action. Hence it is that Christ calls hatred murder, and a wanton eye adultery. Secret hatred often issues in open murder, and secret wanton glances of the eye do often issue in visible adultery. If Amnon be sick with the sinful conceptions of incestuous lust, how will his soul be in pain and travail till he hath brought forth! And how many are there that in secret have taken now and then but one cup more than enough, who now may be seen at

[1] Qu. 'but'?—ED.

high noon reeling against every post. Look, as secret diseases in the body, if not cured, will in time openly break forth, so secret sins in the soul, if not pardoned and purged, will in time be openly revealed. Covetousness was Judas his secret sin; and no sooner doth an occasion or a temptation present itself, but he is very ready and forward to betray and sell his Lord and Master for thirty pieces of silver before all the world: 'Lust having conceived, brings forth sin,' James i. 15; and that thus, first, sin hath its conception, and that is delight; and then its formation, and that is design; and then its birth, and that is action; and then its growth, and that is custom; and then its end, and that is damnation. But,

Thirdly, Secret sinning puts far more respect and fear upon men than upon God. Thou wilt be unjust in secret, and wanton in secret, and unclean in secret, and treacherous in secret, &c., and why, but because thou art afraid that such or such men should know it, or that such and such friends should know it, or that such and such relations should know it? Ah! poor wretch, art thou afraid of the eye of a man, of a man that shall die, and of the son of man, which shall be made as grass? Isa. li. 12, and yet not tremble under his eye, 'whose eyes are as a flame of fire, sharp and terrible, such as pierce into the inward parts?' Rev. i. 14, Heb. iv. 13. Ah! how full of atheism is that man's heart, that tacitly saith, 'If my sins be but hid from the eyes of the world, I do not care though the Lord knows them, though the Lord strictly observes them, though the Lord sets a mark, a memorandum upon them.' What is this, O man, but to brave it out with God, and to tempt him, and provoke him to his very face, 'who is light, and in whom there is no darkness at all'? 1 John i. 5, 6. Ah! sinner, sinner, can man damn thee? can man disinherit thee? can man fill thy conscience with horrors and terrors? can man make thy life a very hell? can man bar the gates of glory against thee? can man speak thee into the grave by a word of his mouth? and after all, can man cast thee into endless, easeless, and remediless torments? Oh no! Can God do all this? Oh yes! Why, then, doth not thy heart stand more in awe of the eye of the great God, than it doth of the eye of a poor, weak, mortal man?

I have insisted the longer on this particular, because there is not any one thing in all the world that doth more hinder secret communion with God and secret prayer, than secret sins. And oh that you would all make it your great business to watch against secret sins, and to pray against secret sins, and to mourn over secret sins, and deeply to judge and condemn yourselves for secret sins, and carefully and conscientiously to shun and avoid all occasions and provocations that may be as fuel to secret sins.

Certainly there are no men or women that are so sincere and serious in closet-prayer, or that are so frequent, so fervent, so constant in closet-prayer, or that are so delightful, so resolute, so undaunted, or so unwearied in closet-prayer, as those that keep themselves most clear and free from secret sins.

For a close, remember this,—that though secret sins are in some respects more dangerous than other sins are, yet in three respects they are not so bad nor so dangerous as other sins are.

First, In that they do not so scandalise religion as open sins do.

Secondly, In that they do not shame, grieve, and wound the hearts of the saints as open sins do.

Thirdly, In that they are not so infectious to others, nor such provocations to others to sin against the Lord as open sins are.

And thus you may see what those things are that you must carefully take heed of, as ever you would addict yourselves to closet-prayer.

And as you must take heed of these five things, so there are several other things that you must carefully and conscientiously apply yourselves to, as ever you would be found faithful and constant in this great duty, viz. closet-prayer.

Now they are these:

[1.] *First, Lament greatly and mourn bitterly over the neglect of this choice duty.* He that doth not make conscience of mourning over the neglect of this duty, will never make conscience of performing this duty. Oh that your heads were waters, and your eyes a fountain of tears, that you might weep day and night for the great neglect of closet-prayer, Jer. ix. 1. He that mourns most for the neglect of this duty, will be found most in the practice of this duty. He that makes most conscience to accuse, arraign, and condemn himself for neglecting closet-prayer, he will make most conscience of giving himself up to closet-prayer. It is said of Adam that he turned his face towards the garden of Eden, and from his heart bitterly lamented his great fall. Oh that you would turn your faces towards your closets, and bitterly lament your rare going into them. But,

[2.] *Secondly, Habituate yourselves, accustom yourselves, to closet-prayer.* Make private prayer your constant trade. Frequency begets familiarity, and familiarity confidence. We can go freely and boldly into that friend's house whom we often visit. What we are habituated to we do with ease and delight. A man that is habituated or accustomed to write, to read, to ride, to run, or to play on this or that musical instrument, &c., he doth it all with delight and ease; and so a man that doth habituate himself to closet-prayer, he will manage it with delight and ease. But,

[3.] *Thirdly, Keep a diary of all your closet-experiences*, Deut. vii. 18, 19; Ps. lxvi. 12. Oh carefully record and book down all your closet mercies! oh be often in reading over your closet experiences, and be often in meditating and in pondering upon your closet experiences! There is no way like this, to inflame your love to closet-prayer, and to engage your hearts in this secret trade of private prayer.

Oh remember that at such a time you went into your closets with hard hearts, and dry eyes; but before you came out of your closets, ah how sweetly, how evangelically, how powerfully were you melted, and humbled before the Lord! Ps. vi. 6, xxxix. 12, lvi. 8. Oh remember how that at another time you went into your closets clouded and benighted, but came out of your closets with as glorious a shine of God upon your souls, as Moses had upon his face, when he came down from the mount from communing with God! Exod. xxxiv. 28, 29. Oh remember how often you have gone into your closets with cold, frozen spirits, but before you came out of your closets what a fire hath God kindled in your souls, what a spirit of burning have you found in your hearts!

Luke xxiv. 31, 32, Isa. iv. 4. Oh remember how often you have gone into your closets straitened and shut up, but before you have come out, how have your souls been like the chariots of Aminadab! Cant. vi. 12. Oh remember what power God hath given you against corruptions in your closets, and what strength God hath given you against temptations in your closets! Oh remember the sweet discoveries of divine love that you have had when in your closets! Oh remember the secret visits, the secret kisses, the secret embraces, the secret whispers, the secret love-tokens that Christ hath given you in your closets! Oh seriously ponder upon these things, and then closet duties will be sweet unto you!

It was a sweet saying of Bernard, 'O saint, knowest thou not that thy husband Christ is bashful, and will not be familiar in company; retire thyself by meditation into thy closet, or into the fields, and there thou shalt have Christ's embraces,'[1] Cant. viii. 11, 12. *Meditatio nutrix orationis*, meditation is the nurse of prayer.[2] Oh the more any man meditates upon his closet-experiences, the more he shall find his heart engaged to closet duties; the more you ponder upon closet experiences, the sweeter will closet-experiences be to your souls; and the sweeter closet-experiences are to your souls, the more your souls will delight to be with God in your closets.

Pliny tells us of one Messala Corvinus, whose memory was so bad, that he forgot his own name.[3] And I am afraid that many of your memories are so bad, that you forget your closet-mercies, your closet-experiences.

I have read of such a pestilential disease once at Athens, as took away the memories of those that were infected with it, so that they forgot their own names. Oh that I had not cause to fear that some pestilential disease or other, hath so taken away the memories of many, that they have quite forgot their closet-experiences. Well, friends, remember this, though stony hearts are bad, yet iron memories are good; and oh that you would all labour after iron memories, that so you may remember and ponder upon your closet-experiences. I have read of the heathens, how they made use of white and black stones, for these two ends: first, they gave them to persons at their arraignment before the judges; if they were condemned to death, they gave him a black stone, but if absolved and set free, a white stone. To which custom the Holy Ghost seems to allude in that Rev. ii. 17, 'To him that overcometh will I give a white stone.' A second use of those stones was this, that by them they might keep an account of all the good days or evil days they had met withal in their lives. Hence Giacopo Senzaro having been long in love, and much crossed about his match, he filled a pot full of black stones, putting only one white stone among them, and being asked the reason, answered, 'There will come one white day,' meaning his marriage day, 'which will make amends for all my black days.'

Ah, friends! how often hath God given you the white stone in your closets! Certainly you have had more white stones than black stones: your closet mercies and experiences have been more than your public crosses and miseries. O sirs! did you but reckon your good days according to the white stones you have had in your closets, it would make you more in love with closet-prayer than ever. But,

[1] Serm. on Cantic.—G. [2] Gerson. [3] Lib. vii. cap. 24. [*sub memoriâ*.—G.]

[4.] *Fourthly, Be sure that you do not spend so much of your precious time in public duties and ordinances, as that you can spare none for private duties, for secret services.* Though Pharaoh's kine ate up one another, yet our duties must not eat up one another, Gen. xli. 4. Public duties must not eat up family duties, nor family duties must not eat up public duties, nor neither of them must not eat up closet duties. The wisdom of a Christian doth most eminently sparkle and shine, in giving every duty its proper time and place; I was going to say, that either he was no Christian, or at least no excellent Christian, that is all eye to read, or all ear to hear, or all tongue to speak, or all knee to bow, to kneel, to pray, Eccles. viii. 5. Ah! how many are there that spend so much time in hearing of this man and that, and in running up and down from meeting to meeting, that they have no time to meet with God in their closets. O sirs! your duties are never so amiable and lovely, they are never so orient and beautiful, as when they are seasonably and orderly performed.

Oh how wise are the men of this world, so to order all their civil affairs, that no one business shall interfere with another. They set apart for each business a convenient proportion of time; they allot an hour for one business, two for another, three for another, &c. Oh that we were as wise for our souls, as wise for eternity, as they are for this world. Oh that our hearts would so consult with our heads, that we may never want a convenient time to seek God in a corner! That devil that loves to set one man against another, and one nation against another, and one Christian against another, that devil loves to set one ordinance against another, and one duty against another. Hence it is that on the one hand he works some to cry up public prayers, in opposition to secret prayer; and on the other hand he works others to cry up private duties in opposition to all public duties; whereas all Christians stand obliged by God, so to manage one sort of duties, as not to shut out another sort of duties. Every Christian must find time and room for every duty incumbent upon him. But,

[5.] *Fifthly, Love Christ with a more inflamed love.* Oh strengthen your love to Christ, and your love to closet-duties. Lovers love much to be alone, to be in a corner together, Cant. vii. 10–12. Certainly the more any man loves the Lord Jesus, the more he will delight to be with Christ in a corner. There was a great deal of love between Jonathan and David,—1 Sam. xviii. xix. and xx. compared,—and according to their love, so was their private converse, their secret communion one with another; they were always best when in the field together, or when in a corner together, or when behind the door together, or when locked up together; and just so would it be with you, did you but love the Lord Jesus Christ with a more raised and a more inflamed love; you would be always best when you were most with Christ in a corner.

Divine love is like a rod of myrtle, which, as Pliny reports, makes the traveller that carries it in his hand so lively and cheerful, that he never faints or grows weary.[1] Ah! friends, did you but love the Lord Jesus with a more strong, with a more raised love, you would never faint in closet-duties, nor you would never grow weary of closet-duties. Look, as the Israelites removed their tents from Mithcah to Hashmonah,

[1] Nat. Hist., lib. xv. cap. 35, 36, *et seq.*—G.

from *sweetness* to *swiftness*,—as the words import, Num. xxxiii. 29,—so the sweetness of divine love will make a man move swiftly on in a way of closet-duties. Divine love will make all closet-duties more easy to the soul, and more pleasant and delightful to the soul; and therefore do all you can to strengthen your love to Christ, and your love to closet-work.

It was observed among the primitive Christians, that they were so full of love one to another, that they could be acquainted one with another as well in half an hour as in half a year. O sirs! if your hearts were but more full of love to Christ, and closet-duties, you would quickly be better acquainted with them, you would quickly know what secret communion with Christ behind the door means. But,

[6.] *Sixthly, Be highly, thoroughly, and fixedly resolved, in the strength of Christ, to keep close to closet-duties, in the face of all difficulties and discouragements that you may meet withal*, Ps. xliv. 17–20. A man of no resolution, or of weak resolution, will be won with a nut, and lost with an apple. Satan, and the world, and carnal relations, and your own hearts, will cast in many things to discourage you, and take you off from closet prayer; but be ye nobly and firmly resolved to keep close to your closets, let the world, the flesh, and the devil, do and say what they can. Daniel was a man of an invincible resolution; rather than he would omit praying in his chamber, he would be cast into the den of lions. Of all the duties of religion, Satan is the most deadly enemy to this of secret prayer; partly because secret prayer spoils him in his most secret designs, plots, and contrivances against the soul, and partly because secret prayer is so musical and delightful to God, and partly because secret prayer is of such rare use and advantage to the soul, and partly because it lays not the soul so open to pride, vain glory, and worldly applause, as prayer in the synagogue doth; and therefore he had rather that a man should pray a thousand times in the synagogues, or in the corner of the streets, or behind a pillar, than that he should pray once in his closet; and therefore you had need to steel your hearts with holy courage and resolution, that whatever suggestions, temptations, oppositions, or objections you may encounter with, that yet you will keep close to closet prayer.

There is not any better bulwark in the day of battle, than an heroic resolution of heart before the day of battle. Sanctified resolutions do exceedingly weaken and discourage Satan in his assaults, they do greatly daunt and dishearten him in all his undertakings against the soul. That man will never long be quiet in his closet, who is not stedfastly resolved to seek the Lord in a corner, though all the powers of darkness should make head against him. O sirs! divine fortitude, holy resolutions, will make you like a wall of brass, that no arrows can pierce; they will make you like armour of proof, that no shot can hurt; they will make you like that angel that rolled away the stone from before the door of the sepulchre, Mat. xxviii. 2; they will either enable you to remove the greatest mountains of oppositions that lie between you and closet-prayer, or else they will enable you to step over them.

Luther was a man of great resolution, and a man that spent much time in closet-prayer. And such another was Nehemiah, who met with so much opposition, that had he not been steeled by a strong and

obstinate resolution, he could never have rebuilded the temple, but would have sunk in the midst of his works. Now, he was a man for private prayer, as I have shewn in the beginning of this treatise. Who more resolute than David? and who more for secret prayer than David? The same I might say of Paul, Basil, and many others, who have been famous in their generations.

O sirs! sanctified resolutions for closet prayer, will chain you faster to closet prayer, than ever Ulysses his resolutions did chain him to the mast of the ship. It was a noble resolution that kept Ruth close to her mother, when her sister Orpah only compliments her, kisses her, and takes her leave of her, Ruth i. 10–20. Be but nobly resolved for closet-prayer, and then you will keep close to it, when others only court it, and take their leave of it.

In the Salentine country, there is mention made of a lake, that is still brimful: if you put in never so much, it never runs over; if you draw out never so much, it is still full.[1] The resolution of every Christian for closet-prayer, should be like this lake, still brimful. Tide life tide death, come honour or reproach, come loss or gain, come liberty or bonds, come what can come, the true-bred Christian must be fully and constantly resolved to keep close to his closet. But,

[7.] *Seventhly, Labour for a greater effusion of the Holy Spirit;* for the greater measure any man hath of the Spirit of God, the more that man will delight to be with God in secret: Zech. xii. 10, 'And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications;' vers. 12–14, 'And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.' Joel ii. 28, 29, Isa. xliv. 3; mark, in the last of the last days, when men shall be generally under a greater effusion of the Holy Spirit than ever, then they shall be more given up to secret prayer than ever. There will never be such praying apart, and such mourning apart, as there will be when the Lord shall pour out most richly, gloriously, abundantly, of his Spirit upon his poor people. Now, every one shall pour out his tears and his soul before God in a corner, to shew the soundness of their sorrow, and to shew their sincerity by their secresy; for *ille dolet vere, qui sine teste dolet,* he grieves with a witness, that grieves without a witness.

Certainly, the more any man is now under the blessed pouring out of the Spirit of Christ, the more that man gives himself up to secret communion with Christ. Every man is more or less with Christ in his closet, as he is more or less under the anointings of the Spirit of Christ. The more any man hath of the Spirit of Christ, the more he loves Christ, and the more any man loves Christ, the more he delights to be with Christ alone. Lovers love to be alone. The more any man hath of the Spirit of Christ, the more his heart will be set to please Christ. Now, nothing pleaseth Christ more than the secret prayers of his people: Cant. ii. 14, 'O my dove that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret

[1] Plin. Hist., lib. ii. cap. 103 [Rather 106, the lake of the Salentini, near Manduria.—G.]

places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.' And therefore such a one will be much in secret prayer. The more any man hath of the Spirit of Christ, the more his heart will be set upon glorifying and exalting Christ. Now, nothing glorifies Christ more, nor exalts him more, than secret prayer; and therefore the more any man hath of the Spirit of Christ, the more that man will be found in secret prayer.

There are many persons who say, they would be more in their closets than they are, but that they meet with many hindrances, many occasions, many diversions, many temptations, many oppositions, many difficulties, many discouragements, which prevent them. Ah, friends! had you a greater measure of the Holy Spirit upon you, none of these things should ever be able to hinder your secret trade heaven-ward. Had you a more rich anointing of the Spirit upon you, you would never plead, there is a lion in the way, a lion in the streets, Prov. xxvi. 13; but were there a thousand lions between you and your closets, you would either step over them, or make your way through them, that so you might enjoy communion with Christ in your closets. But,

[8.] *Eighthly* and lastly, As ever you would keep close to private prayer, *Be frequent in the serious consideration of eternity.* Oh see eternity standing at the end of every closet-prayer, and this will make you pray to purpose in your closets.

O sirs! every work you do, is a step to a blessed or to a cursed eternity. Every motion, every action in this life, is a step toward eternity. As every step that a traveller takes brings him forward to his journey's end, so every step that a man takes in the secret ways of righteousness and holiness, such as closet duties are, they bring him nearer to his journey's end, they bring him nearer to a blessed eternity. Look, as every step the sinner takes in a way of wickedness, brings him nearer to hell; so every step that a saint takes in a way of holiness, brings him nearer to heaven. Look, as every step that a wicked man takes in the ways of unrighteousness brings him nearer to a cursed eternity, so every step that a godly man takes in a way of righteousness, brings him nearer to a blessed eternity.

Zeuxis, the famous painter, was so exceeding careful and cautious in drawing all his lines, that he would let no piece of his go abroad into the world to be seen of men, till he had turned it over and over, and viewed it on this side and that side, again and again, to see if he could spy any fault in it; and being asked the reason why he was so curious, and so long in drawing his lines, answered, *Æternitati pingo*, I paint for eternity.[1] O sirs! we all pray for eternity, we fast for eternity, we read for eternity, we hear for eternity, we wait for eternity, we weep for eternity; and therefore oh how curiously, how exactly, how wisely, how faithfully, how carefully, how diligently, how unweariedly, should we be in all our closet duties and services; seeing that all we do is in order to eternity! Friends! you must all ere long be eternally blessed, or eternally cursed; eternally happy, or eternally miserable; eternally saved, or eternally damned; eternally accepted, or eternally rejected. And therefore what infinite cause have you frequently to shut to your closet-doors, and to plead mightily with God in a corner, for the lives

[1] See Index, *sub nomine*, for other references to this.—G.

of your poor, precious, and immortal souls, that they may be eternally saved in the great day of our Lord Jesus. O sirs! when any hindrances to closet-prayer present themselves to you, seriously remember eternity, and that will remove them.

It is related of one Pachomius, that whensoever he felt any unlawful desires to arise in his mind, he was wont to drive them away with the remembrance of eternity.[1]

The same author relates a story out of *Benedictus Rhexanus*,[2] of an ungodly fellow, who on a certain night could not sleep, who, upon the serious consideration of death and eternity, and the damned lying in hell, could not be at rest, but eternity did still run in his mind; fain would he have shaken off the thoughts thereof, as gnawing worms; therefore he followed sports, and pastimes, and merry-meetings, and sought out companions like himself, and sat oftentimes so long at his cups, that he laid his conscience asleep, and so seemed to take some rest; but when he was awakened, his conscience flew in his face, and would still be a-suggesting sad thoughts of eternity to him. Of all things in the world he could not bear it, to be kept awake in the night; but so it happened that being sick, he was kept awake one night, and could not sleep at all, whereupon these thoughts rise in him: 'What, is it so tedious then to be kept from sleep one night, and to lie a few hours in the dark? Oh what is it then to be kept in torments and everlasting darkness! I am here in my own house upon a soft bed in the dark, kept from sleep but one night; but to lie in flames and endless misery, how dreadful must that needs be!' These and such like meditations were the happy means of this young man's conversion.

I have read a notable story of one Theodorus,[3] a Christian young man in Egypt, who, when there was a great deal of feasting, mirth, and music in his father's house, withdrew himself from all the company, and being got alone, he thus thought with himself, 'Here is content and delight enough for the flesh, I may have what I desire, but how long will this last? this will not hold out long; then falling down upon his knees before the Lord in secret, he said, O Lord, my heart is open unto thee, I indeed know not what to ask, but only this: Lord, let me not die eternally; O Lord, thou knowest I love thee, O let me live eternally to praise thee.'

If there be any way or means on earth to bring us upon our knees before God in secret, it is the serious and solemn thoughts of eternity. Oh that the fear of eternity might fall upon all your souls! Oh that you would all seriously consider, that after a short time is expired, you must all enter upon an eternal estate! Oh consider that eternity is an infinite, endless, bottomless gulf, which no line can fathom, no time can reach, no age can extend to, no tongue can express. It is a duration always present, a being always in being; it is *unum perpetuum hodie*, one perpetual day, which shall never see light.[4] O sirs! this is, and must be for a lamentation, viz., that eternity is a thing that most men never think of, or else very slenderly; a snatch and away, as dogs are said to lap and away at the river Nilus. But as ever you would

[1] Drex[elius] de eternit. consid. 8.
[2] Ibid con. 5.
[3] Clarke, as before, pp. 52, 62.—G.
[4] Qu. 'night'?—ED.

have your hearts chained to your closets and to closet duties, as the men of Tyrus chained their god Apollo to a post, that they might be sure of him; then seriously and frequently ponder upon eternity, and with those forty valiant martyrs, be still a crying out ὦ αἰδιότης, ὦ αἰδιότης, O eternity, eternity!'[1]

Mr Wood,[2] after some holy discourse, fell a-musing, and cried out before all present, for near half a quarter of an hour together, 'For ever, for ever, for ever.' Austin's prayer was, 'Hack me, hew me, burn me here, but spare me hereafter, spare me hereafter.' Certainly, if Christians would but spare one quarter of an hour every day in the solemn thoughts of eternity, it would make them more in love with closet-prayer than ever, yea, it would make them more fearful of omitting closet-prayer than ever, and more careful and conscientious in the discharge of all closet-duties than ever.

And thus, according to my weak measure, I have given out all that at present the Lord hath graciously given in to my poor soul, concerning this most necessary, most glorious, and most useful point of points, viz., closet-prayer. I shall, by assisting grace, follow this poor piece with my prayers, that it may be so blessed from on high, as that it may work mightily to the internal and eternal welfare, both of reader, hearer, and writer.

[1] Basil, martyr, 40.

[2] Probably the Mr Wood whose funeral sermon was the first form of 'Apples of Gold.' See Vol. I., *in loc.*—G.

HEAVEN ON EARTH.

NOTE.

'Heaven on Earth,' originally published in 1654, passed into a 'second edition, corrected and enlarged,' in 1657. It is from the latter, collated with the former, our text is taken. The title-page will be found below.* Another bears the date of 1664; and ever since this has been one of the most prized of Brooks's books. The quaint 'Licence' by Caryl, for publication, is subjoined.†

* HEAVEN

ON

EARTH.

OR

A Serious Discourse touching a well-grounded

Assurance

Of Men's Everlasting Happiness and Blessedness.

Discovering the Nature of Assurance, the possibility of Attaining it, the Causes, Springs, and Degrees of it; with the Resolution of severall weighty Questions.

By THOMAS BROOKS, Preacher of the Gospel at *Margarets* Fishstreet-Hill.

The Second Edition Corrected and Enlarged.

That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all Riches of the full Assurance of understanding, Col. 2. 2.

Qui fidei suæ sensum in corde habet, hic scit Christum Jesum in se esse. *Ambros.* 2 *ad Corinth c.* 13. 5.

LONDON; Printed by *M S.* for *John Hancock*, and are to be sold at the first shop in *Popes*-head Alley, in *Cornhill.* 1657.

† The greatest thing that we can desire—next to the glory of God—is our own salvation; and the sweetest thing we can desire, is the assurance of our salvation. In this life we cannot get higher, than to be assured of that which in the next life is to be enjoyed. All saints shall enjoy a heaven when they leave this earth; some saints enjoy a heaven while they are here on earth. That saints might enjoy two heavens, is the project of this book. That this project may be published, and by a blessing from the third heaven prospered, the book is licensed by JOSEPH CARYL.[1]

The ninth of the first month, commonly called March, 1653.

[1] The venerable and learned expositor of the book of Job. He died 1673.—G.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To the Right Honourable the Generals of the Fleets of the Commonwealth of England, and to those gallant worthies, my much honoured friends, who with the noble generals have deeply jeoparded their lives unto many deaths upon the seas, out of love to their country's good, and out of respect to the interest of Christ, and the faithful people of this commonwealth, such honour and happiness as is promised to all that love and honour the Lord Jesus.

Renowned Sirs,

The better anything is, the more communicative it will be; for *bonum est sui communicativum.* There are two sorts of goods; there are *bona throni,* and there are *bona scabelli:* goods of the throne, as God, Christ, grace, assurance, &c.; and goods of the footstool, as honour, riches, &c.[1] A man may have enough of the goods of the footstool to sink him, but he can never have enough to satisfy him.[2] Man's happiness and blessedness, his felicity and glory, lies in his possessing the goods of the throne, which that you may, I humbly desire you seriously to view over the ensuing treatise.

It was an excellent saying of Lewis of Bavyer [Bavaria?] emperor of Germany, *Hujusmodi comparandæ sunt opes, quæ cum naufragio simul enatent;* Such goods are worth getting and owning, as will not sink nor wash away, if a shipwreck happen, but will wade and swim out with us. Such are the goods that are here presented in this following discourse. In all storms, tempests, and shipwrecks, they will abide with the soul, they will walk and lie down with the soul, yea, they will go to the grave, to heaven, with the soul: they will in the greatest storms be an ark to the soul.

I have observed in some terrible storms that I have been in, that the mariners' and the passengers' want of assurance, and of those other pearls of price that in this treatise are presented to public view, hath caused their countenance to change, their hearts to melt; it hath made them to 'stagger and reel to and fro like drunken men, like men at their wits' ends,' *vide* Ps. lxxvi. 5; whereas others that have had assu-

[1] Cf. 'Precious Remedies,' Vol. I. page 1. The saying is from Augustine.—G.

[2] *Nihil bonum sine summo bono,* Aug[ustine], Nothing is good, without the chiefest good. . . . . *Omne bonum in summo bono,* All good is in the chiefest good.

rance, and their pardon in their bosoms, &c., have bore up bravely, and slept quietly, and walked cheerfully, and practically have said, as Alexander once did, when he was in a great danger, 'Now,' saith he, 'here is a danger fit for the spirit of Alexander to encounter withal.' So they now, here are storms and dangers fit for assured, pardoned souls to encounter withal, &c.[1]

Gentlemen, This following discourse I do not present to you as a thing that needs your protection, for *veritas stat in aperto campo*, truth stands in the open fields, and it will make the lovers of it to stand, triumph, and overcome. *Magna est veritas et prevalebit*, great is truth, and shall prevail. But, upon these following grounds, I render it to you:

First, You have honoured the Almighty, by helping him against the high and mighty; and he hath honoured you, by owning of you, by standing by you, by acting for you, and by making of you prosperous and victorious over a near enemy, a powerful enemy, an enraged enemy, a resolved enemy, a subtle enemy, a prepared enemy, a lofty enemy; and therefore I cannot but desire to honour you by dedicating the following treatise to the service of your souls, 1 Sam. ii. 30.[2]

Secondly, Because you are my friends, and that cordial love and friendship which I have found from you hath stamped in my affections a very high valuation of you.

The ancients painted friendship a fair young man bare-headed, in a poor garment, at the bottom whereof was written life and death, in the upper part summer and winter; his bosom was open, so that his heart might be seen, whereupon was written *longe, prope*, a friend at hand and afar off. Verily, your undeserved love and respects have made me willing to open my bosom to you in this epistle, and in the following treatise, as to friends that I love and honour.[3]

When one came to Alexander, and desired him that he might see his treasure, he bid one of his servants take him, and shew him, not ἀργυρίου τούλαντα, his money, but τοὺς φίλους, his friends. It seems he put a higher value upon them than he did upon all the wealth which he had. Faithful friends are an invaluable treasure, and the rarity of them doth much enhance the price of them.[4]

Thirdly, Because of its exceeding usefulness and suitableness to your conditions.

I have been some years at sea, and through grace I can say, that I would not exchange my sea-experiences for England's riches. I am not altogether ignorant of the troubles, trials, temptations, dangers, and deaths that do attend you.[5] And therefore I have been the more stirred in my spirit to present the following discourse to you, wherein

[1] A philosopher could say, in danger of shipwreck in a light starry night, 'Surely I shall not perish, there are so many eyes of Providence over me.'—[Plato in the famous verses.—G.] But these had neither so much faith nor courage; these men of might had lost their hands and hearts.

[2] As it was said of Cæsar, that while he restored the statue of Pompey he established his own; so while men honour God, they preserve their own.

[3] *Magnes amoris, amor*, Love is the loadstone of love; and therefore he said right, *Si vis amari, ama*, If thou wilt love, thou shalt be loved.

[4] Socrates preferred the king's countenance above his coin.

[5] Ps. cvii. 24. It is between Christian and Christian, as between two lute strings that are tuned one to another; no sooner one is struck, but the other trembles.

is discovered the nature of assurance, the possibility of attaining assurance, the causes, springs, degrees, excellencies, and properties of assurance; also the special seasons and times of God's giving assurance, with the resolutions of several weighty questions touching assurance. Further, in this treatise, as in a glass, you may see these ten special things clearly and fully opened and manifested.

1. What knowledge that is that accompanies salvation.
2. What faith that is that accompanies salvation.
3. What repentance that is that accompanies salvation.
4. What obedience that is that accompanies salvation.
5. What love that is that accompanies salvation.
6. What prayer that is that accompanies salvation.
7. What perseverance that is that accompanies salvation.
8. What hope that is that accompanies salvation.
9. The difference between true assurance, and that which is counterfeit.
10. The wide difference there is between the witness of the Spirit, and the hissing of the old serpent.

Gentlemen and Friends, You have your lives in your hands, there is but a short step between you and eternity.[1] I would fain have you all happy for ever; to that purpose, I humbly beseech you, spare so much time, from your many great and weighty occasions, as to read this treatise, that in all humility I lay at your feet, and follow this counsel that in all love and faithfulness I shall now give unto you. For my design in all is your happiness here, and your blessedness hereafter.

First, Get and keep communion with God. Your strength to stand, and your strength to withstand all assaults, is from your communion with God. Communion with God is that that will make you stand fast, and triumph over all enemies, difficulties, dangers, and deaths.[2]

While Samson kept his communion with God, no enemy could stand before him, he goes on conquering and to conquer, he lays heaps upon heaps; but when he has fallen in his communion with God, he falls presently, easily, and sadly before his enemies.

So long as David kept up his communion with God, no enemies could stand before him; but when he was fallen in his communion with God, he flies before the son of his bowels.

Job keeps up his communion with God, and conquers Satan upon the dunghill. Adam loses his communion with God, and falls before Satan in paradise. Communion is the result of union. Communion is a reciprocal exchange between Christ and a gracious soul. Communion is Jacob's ladder, where you have Christ sweetly descending down into the soul, and the soul by divine influences sweetly ascending up to

[1] Say, with that famous painter Zeuxis, *Æternitati pingo*, I paint for eternity, I provide for eternity. Eternity is that *unum perpetuum hodie*, that one perpetual to-day. [Index: Zeuxis.—G.]

[2] Communion with God will make a man as courageous and bold as a lion, yea, as a young lion that is in his hot blood, and fearless of any creature, Prov. xxviii. 1, ככפיר. Now the proverb is, *Tutiores cervi duce leone, quam leones duce cervo*, It is more likely that harts will get victory with a lion to their leader, than lions with a leading hart. Joshua, captain of the Lord's battles, must be of a lion-like courage, and what will make them so, but communion with God? It was the saying of the old Earl of Essex, that he was never afraid to fight but when he was conscious of some sin with which he had provoked God and lost communion with God.

Christ. Communion with God is a shield upon land, and an anchor at sea; it is a sword to defend you, and a staff to support you; it is balm to heal you, and a cordial to strengthen you. High communion with Christ will yield you two heavens, a heaven upon earth, and a heaven after death. He enjoys nothing that wants communion with God; he wants nothing that enjoys communion with God; therefore above all gettings get communion with Christ, and above all keepings keep communion with Christ. All other losses are not comparable to the loss of communion with Christ. He that hath lost his communion, hath lost his comfort, his strength, his all, and it will not be long before the Philistines take him, and put out his eyes, and bind him with fetters of brass, and make him grind in a prison, as they did Samson, Judges xvi. 20, 21.

Secondly, Make a speedy and a thorough improvement of all opportunities of grace and mercy.[1] Sleep not in harvest-time, trifle not away your market-hours, your golden seasons; you have much work to do in a short time; you have a God to honour, a Christ to rest on, a race to run, a crown to win, a hell to escape, a heaven to obtain.[2] You have weak graces to strengthen, strong corruptions to weaken; you have many temptations to withstand, and afflictions to bear; you have many mercies to improve, and many services to perform, &c. Therefore take hold on all opportunities and advantages, whereby you may be strengthened and bettered in your noble part. Take heed of crying *Cras, cras,* To-morrow, to-morrow, when God saith: 'To-day, if you will hear my voice, harden not your hearts,' Heb. iii. 7, 8.[3] Manna must be gathered in the morning, and the orient pearl is generated of the morning dew. It is a very sad thing for a man to begin to die before he begins to live. He that neglects a golden opportunity, doth but create to himself a great deal of misery, as Saul, and many others, have found by sad experience. He that would to the purpose do a good action, must not neglect his season.

The men of Issachar were famous in David's account for wisdom, because they acted seasonably and opportunely, 1 Chron. xii. 32. God will repute and write that man a wise man, who knows and observes his seasons of doing. Such there have been, who by giving a glass of water opportunely, have obtained a kingdom, as you may see in the story of Thaumastus and king Agrippa.

Time, saith one, were a good commodity in hell, and the traffic of it most gainful, where for one day a man would give ten thousand worlds if he had them (*Bernard*).[4]

One passing through the streets of Rome, and seeing many of the women playing and delighting themselves with monkeys and baboons, and such like things, asked 'whether they had no children to play and delight themselves with?' So when men trifle away their precious time, and golden opportunities, playing and toying with this vanity and

[1] *Bonus servatus facit bonum bene factum.*

[2] Petrarch telleth of one who, being invited to dinner next day, answered, *Ego à multis annis crastinum non habui,* I have not had a morrow for this many years.

[3] A man, saith Luther, lives forty years before he knows himself a fool, and by that time he sees his folly his life is ended, &c.

[4] It was the commendations of the blessed Hooper, that he was spare of diet, sparer of words, and sparest of time.

that, we may ask whether these men have no God, no Christ, no Scripture, no promises, no blessed experiences, no hopes of heaven's glories to delight and entertain themselves with? Certainly, we should not reckon any time into the account of our lives, but that which we carefully pass, and well spend, seeing the heathen could say, *Diu fuit, non diu vixit*, He was long, he did not live long (*Damascene*).

I have read of one Barlaam, who, being asked how old he was, answered, Five-and-forty years old; to whom Josaphah replied, 'Thou seemest to be seventy.' 'Truth,' saith he, 'if you reckon ever since I was born; but I count not those years that were spent in vanity.'[1]

Most men spend the greatest part of their time about things that are by the by, that are of little or no value; as Domitian, the Roman emperor, spent his time in stabbing of flies, and Artaxerxes spent his time in making hafts for knives, and Solyman the great Turk spent his time in making of notches of horn for bows, and Archimedes spent his time in drawing lines on the ground when that famous city Syracuse was taken, and Myrmecides spent more time to make a bee than some men do to build a house.[2]

Sirs, I beseech you remember that it was Cato, a heathen, that said 'that account must be given not only of our labour, but also of our leisure.'[3] And in affirming this, he affirms no more than what the Scripture speaks. But oh what a sad account, then, have some to make! Well, as Cleopatra said to Mark Antony, 'It is not for you to be fishing for gudgeons, but for towns, forts, and castles;' so say I, Right honourable and beloved, it is not for you to spend your time about poor, low, contemptible things, but about those high and noble things that make most for the interest of Christ and the good of your country.[4]

It was Titus, a pagan emperor, that uttered this memorable and praiseworthy apophthegm, *Amici, diem perdidi*, My friends, I have lost a day, when he had spent it in company, without doing good.

The Egyptians drew the picture of time with three heads, to represent the three differences. The first of a greedy wolf, gaping for time past, because it hath ravenously devoured even the memory of so many things past recalling; the second of a crowned lion, roaring for time present, because it hath the principality of all action, for which it calls aloud. The third of a deceitful dog, fawning for time to come, because it feeds fond men with many flattering hopes, to their own undoing.

I have read of a man who upon his dying bed would have given a world for time, he still crying out day and night, 'Call time again, call time again.' So a great lady[5] of this land on her death-bed cried out, 'Time, time, a world of wealth for an inch of time.'[5]

One Hermanus, a great courtier in the kingdom of Bohemia, being at point of death, did most lamentably cry out 'that he had spent more time in the palace than in the temple, and that he had added to the

[1] Blessed Bradford the martyr counted that hour lost wherein he did not some good with his tongue, pen, or purse. [2] See references *before:* Index.—G.

[3] Chilo, one of the seven sages, being asked what was the hardest thing in the world to be done, answered, To use and employ a man's time well.

[4] Alexander the Great gave him a check and not a reward, that boasted that he could throw pease at a great distance upon the point of a needle. Ah! how will God at last check those that spend their precious time, as it were, with throwing pease upon the point of a needle! [5] Queen Elizabeth.—G.

riotousness and vices of the court, which he should have sought to have reformed,' and so died, to the horror of those that were about him.[1]

I have been the longer upon this, because I have been a sad spectator of men's misspending their time and trifling away golden opportunities, at sea as well as at land; and though I thus speak (knowing that this treatise will come into other hands beside your own), yet 'I hope better things of you,' to whom I dedicate it, 'even such as do accompany salvation,' Heb. vi. 9.

Thirdly, Take no truths upon trust, but all upon trial: 1 John iv. 1, 'Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.'[2] This age is very full of impostors; therefore try the spirits, as lapidaries do their stones, or as goldsmiths do their metals. A Bristol-stone may look as well as an Indian diamond, and many things glister besides gold.

It was the glorious commendations of the Bereans, 'that they searched the Scriptures daily,' whether those things that Paul and Silas had delivered 'were so;' and this act of theirs made them 'more noble than those of Thessalonica,' Acts xvii. 10, 11.[3] Christian nobility is the best and truest, where God himself is the top of the kin, and religion the root; in regard whereof all other things are but shadows and shapes of nobleness.

A father that had three sons was desirous to try their discretions, which he did by giving to each of them an apple that had some part of it rotten. The first eats up his, rotten and all; the second throws all his away, because some part of it was rotten; the third picks out the rotten, and eats that which was good. The third was the wisest. Some in these days swallow down everything, rotten and sound together; others throw away all truth, because everything that is presented to them is not truth; but surely they are the wisest that know how to choose the good and refuse the evil, Isa. vii. 15.

You must not, with Pythagoras's scholars, magnify the *ipse dixit* of the greatest clerks, especially in those things that are of eternal concernment to your souls. You will try, and tell, and weigh gold after your fathers; deal so by the truth you hear, and let no man bind you to believe, with Anaxagoras, that snow is black. 'Truth,' saith Basil, 'is hard to be taken by hunting, and must be found out by a narrow observing of her footsteps on every side.' Many are like those in Clemens, that thought truth to be cruelty.[4]

Fourthly, Be exemplary to those among whom you walk, and over whom you command. Bonus dux, bonus comes, a good leader makes a good follower. *Precepta docent, exempla movent*, precepts may instruct, but examples do persuade. Verily, gentlemen, your examples will have a very great influence upon those that are under you. It is natural to inferiors to mind more what their superiors do than what

[1] Lamacus, a commander, said to his offending soldiers, *Non licet in bello bis peccare*, No man must offend twice in war. So God sometimes will not suffer men again and again to neglect the day of grace.

[2] δοκιμιαζετε. Satan may more easily disturb the truth than subvert it.—*Aug[ustine]*.

[3] εὐγενέστεροι. Better-born and bred, of a more noble disposition. They were more noble, not by civil descent, but by spiritual advancement.

[4] *Amicus Socrates, amicus Plato, amicior veritas:* Socrates is my friend, and Plato is my friend, but, above all, truth is my friend. [A saying of Cicero.—G.]

they say; therefore you had need be angelical in your walkings and actings. You are lights upon a hill, you are sea-marks, and therefore every eye will be upon you.[1] Those that can find no ears to hear what you say, will find many eyes to see what you do. Scripture and experience do abundantly evidence that good men's examples have done a world of good in the world, and verily the evil examples of great men especially are very dangerous.

Charles the Fifth was wont to say, that as the eclipse of the sun is a token of great commotions, so the errors and evils of great men bring with them great perturbations and evils to the places and persons where they live. Oh therefore, be exemplary both in lip and life, in word and work, that others 'seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven,' Mat. v. 16. Oh look that your lives be as a commentary upon Christ's life. *Tace lingua, loquere vita;* talk not of a good life, but let thy life speak, said the philosopher.[2]

Alexander willed that the Grecians and the Barbarians should no longer be distinguished by their garments, but by their manners; so should Christians be distinguished from all others, by their lives and by their examples; 2 Sam. xxiii. 3, 'The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord.' An excellent lord is always better than an excellent law. Let your laws be never so good, if the law-makers are bad, all will come to nothing. The people's eyes are much upon that Scripture, 'Have any of the rulers believed on him?' John vii. 48, &c. Abraham was an example of righteousness in Chaldea, Lot was just in Sodom, Daniel was an example of holiness in Babylon, Job was an example of uprightness in the land of Uz, which was a land of much profaneness and superstition, Nehemiah was an example of zeal in Damascus, and Moses was an example of meekness among the muttering and murmuring Israelites. Above all examples, Christ was exemplary in all piety and sanctity, in all righteousness and holiness, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. And why then should not you be exemplary among those poor creatures, those black angels, —I had almost said,—among whom you walk? [3]

It was the saying of Trajanus, a Spaniard, the first stranger that reigned among the Italians, *qualis rex, talis grex*, subjects prove good, by a good king's example. So do soldiers, so do sailors, by the good examples of their superior commanders. Such commanders as are examples of righteousness and holiness to others, are certainly high in worth, and humble in heart; they are the glory of Christ, and the honour of religion.

Fifthly, As you are in public places, so lay out yourselves impartially for the common good of all that have interest in you, or dependence upon you. So did Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Nehemiah,

[1] The complaint of Seneca is ancient, that commonly men live not *ad rationem*, but *ad similitudinem*.—Seneca *de vita beata*. [Sea-marks = *light*-houses. Another Shakesperian word: Coriolanus, V. 3; Othello, V. 2.—G.]

[2] Plutarch saith of Demosthenes, that he was excellent at praising the worthy acts of his ancestors, but not so at imitating them. You may easily apply it.

[3] It was a good law that the Ephesians made, that men should propound to themselves the best patterns, and ever bear in mind some eminent man. The Arabians, if their king be sick or lame, they all feign themselves so.

Ezra, Daniel, but above all, Christ himself. You are more for the people's sake, than the people are for yours.[1] Magistrates are rulers over the persons of the people, but they are servants to the good of the people; as it is the duty of all to serve them, so it is their office to serve all. It is no paradox to affirm, that rulers are the greatest servants. The ancients were wont to place their statues of their princes by their fountains, intimating that they were, or at least should be, fountains of the public good.

The counsellor saith, 'That a man in public place should give his will to God, his love to his master, his heart to his country, his secrets to his friends, his time to business.' It is a base and unworthy spirit, for a man to make himself the centre of all his actions. The very heathen man could say, 'A man's country, and his friends, and others, challenge a great part of him.' The sun, that is the prince of lights, doth impartially serve all, the peasant as well as the prince, the poor as well as the rich, the weak as well as the strong; you must be like the sun.[2] The Sun of righteousness was of a brave public spirit: he healed others, but was hurt himself; he filled others, but was hungry himself; he laid out himself, and he laid down himself for a public good. 'That pilot dies nobly,' saith Seneca, 'who perisheth in the storm with the helm in his hand.' It is really your praise among the saints, that you have ventured killing, burning, drowning, and all to save the ship of the common-wealth from sinking.

Sirs! Be not weary of public work. It is honour enough that God will make any use of you to carry on his design in the world. He is a faithful pay-master; heaven at last will make amends for all. 'You shall reap, if you faint not,' Gal. vi. 9. I do verily believe, God will make use of you to do greater things on the sea, than yet have been done. The Lord hath now begun to set a foot upon the sea; let his enemies tremble. God will not suffer his glory to be buried in the deeps. He is shaking the nations, and will not leave shaking them, till He that is the desire of all nations come. The Lord hath said, 'That he will overturn, overturn, overturn, until he comes, whose right it is to wear the crown, and the diadem, and he will give it him,' Ezek. xxi. 25–27. Till then, there will be little else, but plucking up and breaking down, Jer. xlv. 4. Therefore be courageous, and follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes. You need fear no enemies, that have Christ the conqueror on your sides.

Sixthly, and lastly, *Make it more and more your chiefest work to make plentiful provisions for the eternal welfare of your souls.* Your souls are more worth than ten thousand worlds. All is well, if thy soul be well; if that be safe, all is safe; if that be lost, all is lost, God, Christ, and glory is lost, if the soul be lost.[3]

Worthy sirs, Though others play the courtiers with their souls, yet do not you. The courtier doth all things late: he rises late, and dines late, and sups late, and repents late.

[1] I have read of one that had rather beautify Italy, than his own house. There is very little of this spirit abroad in the world.

[2] So doth the sea feed and refresh the smallest fish, as well as the greatest leviathan; the trees do shade and shelter from heat the least bird, as well as the greatest beast.

[3] *O anima Dei insignita imagine, desponsata fidei, donata spiritu*, &c., Bernard. O divine soul, invested with the image of God, espoused to him by faith!

Sirs! Is it madness to feast the slave, and starve the wife? and is it not greater madness to feast the body and starve the soul? to make liberal provision for the body, and none for the soul? Do not they deserve double damnation, that prefer their bodies above their souls? Methinks our souls should be like to a ship, which is made little and narrow downwards, but more wide and broad upwards. Before all, and above all, look to your souls, watch your souls, make provision for your souls. When this is done, all is done; till this is done, there is nothing done that will yield a man comfort in life, joy in death, and boldness before a judgment-seat.[1]

Callenuceus tells us of a nobleman of Naples, that was wont profanely to say, 'He had two souls in his body, one for God, and another for whosoever would buy it.' Verily, they will make but a bad bargain of it, that, to gain the world, shall sell their souls.

Dear sirs, I had much more to say, but I am afraid that I have already kept you too long from sucking of the honeycomb, from drinking at the fountain. I have held you too long in the porch; and therefore I shall only crave, that you will bear with my plainness, and overlook my weakness; remembering that other addresses would savour more of flattery than of sincerity, more of policy than of piety, and would be both unlovely in me, and displeasing to you.[2]

Now the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ bless you and yours with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, and make you yet more and more instrumental for his glory, and this nation's good, that your names may be for ever precious among his people, that they may bear you still upon their hearts before the Lord; which is, and shall be, the earnest and constant prayer of him who is,

Right honourable and worthy Sirs,

Yours in all Christian observance,

THOMAS BROOKS.

[1] One of the chiefest mirrors to behold God in, is a reasonable soul, which finds itself out, saith one.

[2] Had I a purse suitable to my heart, not a poor godly soldier or sailor in England, who carries his life in one hand, but should have one of these books in the other, &c.

EPISTLE TO THE SAINTS.

To all saints that hold to Christ the head, and that walk according to the laws of the new creature, grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied from God the Father, though our Lord Jesus Christ.

BELOVED IN OUR DEAREST LORD,

You are those worthies 'of whom this world is not worthy,' Heb. xi. 38. You are the princes 'that prevail with God,' Gen. xxxii. 28. You are those 'excellent ones' in whom is all Christ's delight, Ps. xvi. 3. You are his glory. You are his picked, culled, prime instruments which he will make use of to carry on his best and greatest work against his worst and greatest enemies in these latter days. You are 'a seal' upon Christ's heart, you are 'engraven on the palms of his hand;' your names are written upon his breasts, as the names of the children of Israel were upon Aaron's breastplate; you are the 'epistle of Christ;' you are the 'anointed' of Christ; you have 'the spirit of discerning;' you have 'the mind of Christ.'[1] You have the greatest advantages and the choicest privileges to enable you to try truth, to taste truth, to apply truth, to defend truth, to strengthen truth, to uphold truth, and to improve truth.[2] And therefore to whom should I dedicate this following discourse, but to yourselves? You have the next place to Christ in my heart; your good, your gain, your glory, your edification, your satisfaction, your confirmation, your consolation, your salvation, hath put me upon casting in my little, little mite into your treasure.

Beloved, you know that in the time of the law, God did as kindly accept of goats' hair and badgers' skins, of turtle-doves and young pigeons—they being the best things that some of his children had then to offer—as he did accept of gold, jewels, silk, and purple from others. I hope you will shew out the same God-like disposition towards me, in a kind accepting of what is offered in this treatise to your wise and serious consideration. I could wish it better for your sakes, yet such as

[1] Isa. iv. 5; Rev. xvii. 14, and xix. 8, 14; Cant. viii. 6; Isa. xlix. 16; Exod. xxviii. 29; 2 Cor. ii. 3; 1 John ii. 27; 1 Cor. i. 10, 12, 15, 16.

[2] You will not, with Pythagoras his scholars, magnify the *ipse dixit* of the greatest clerks; neither will you believe with Anaxagoras, that snow is black; nor yet will you say, as Antipater, king of Macedonia did, when one presented him with a book treating of happiness, οὐ σχολάζω, I have no leisure; neither will you judge like those that like nothing but the Minervas of their own brains.

it is I do in all love and humility present you with, desiring the Lord to make it an internal and eternal advantage to you.

I shall briefly acquaint you with the reasons that have moved poor me, unworthy I,—who am the least of all saints, who am not worthy to be reckoned among the saints,—to present this following discourse to public view; and they are these that follow:

First, To answer the desires, and gratify the earnest and pious requests of several precious souls, who long to have these things printed upon their hearts, by the hand of the Spirit, that are printed in this book. God speaks aloud through the serious and affectionate desires of the saints; and this hath made me willing to echo to their desires. If great men's desires are to be looked upon as commands, why should good men's desires be looked upon with a squint eye? Seneca, a heathen, could say that *ipse aspectus boni viri delectat*, the very looks of a good man delight one. How much more then should the desires of a good man overcome one?[1]

Secondly, The good acceptance, the fair quarter that my labours of the like nature have found among those that fear the Lord, especially that treatise called 'Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices,'[2] hath encouraged me to present this to public view, not doubting but that the Lord will bless it to the good of many, as I know he hath done the former. Which that he may, I shall not cease to pray, that my weak service may be accepted of the saints, and that their 'love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all sense,' Philip. i. 9–11.[3] That they may approve things that are excellent; that they may be sincere, and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Thirdly, It is exceeding useful to the saints at all times, but especially in changing times, in times wherein every one calls out, 'Watchman, what of the night? watchman, what of the night? and the watchman answereth, The morning cometh, and also the night,' Isa. xxi. 11, 12. Ah! Christians, the Lord is a-shaking heaven and earth; he is a-staining the pride of all glory; he is a-staining his garments with the blood of his enemies;[4] he is renting and tearing, he is burning and breaking, he is pulling up and throwing down, Jer. xlv. 4, 5. Now in the midst of all these concussions and revolutions, thrice happy are those souls that have gained a well-grounded assurance of celestial things, Heb. x. 34. Such souls will not faint, sink, nor shrink in an hour of temptation. Such souls will keep their garments pure and white, and will follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes, Rev. iii. 4, and xiv. 4. Assurance is a believer's ark, where he sits, Noah-like, quiet and still in the midst of all distractions and destructions, combustions and confusions. They are doubly miserable that have neither heaven nor earth, temporals, nor eternals, made sure to them in changing times, Ps. xxiii. 3, 4, Rev. vi. 12.

The *fourth* ground of my presenting this treatise to public view, is,

[1] The philosopher could say, that desires are properly πρὸς τα ἀναγκαστα, to what is necessary.

[2] Them that are extant are sold by the same man that sells this, at the first shop in Pope's-head Alley, next to Cornhill. [See Vol. I.—G.]

[3] ἀισθήσει, *sense*.

[4] Joel iii. 16; Hag. ii. 6; Isa. xxiii. 9; Isa. lxiii. 2, 3.

that little well-grounded assurance that is to be found among most Christians.[1] Most Christians living between fears and hopes, and hanging, as it were, between heaven and hell, sometimes they hope that their state is good, at other times they fear that their state is bad: now they hope that all is well, and that it shall go well with them for ever; anon they fear that they shall perish by the hand of such or such a corruption, or by the prevalency of such or such a temptation; and so they are like a ship in a storm, tossed here and there, &c. Now that these weak souls may be strengthened, that these unstable souls may be established, that these disconsolate souls may be comforted, &c., I have presented this tract to the world, not doubting but that if the Lord shall draw out their spirits to a serious perusal of it, they shall find, through the blessing of Jehovah, that it will contribute very much to their attaining of a full assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness, as also to the keeping and maintaining of that full and blessed assurance; which that it may, I shall follow it with my prayers.

Fifthly, I have published this following discourse, remembering that my life is but a vanishing vapour, James iv. 14, and that the time of my sojourn in this world will be but short, Ps. xxxix. 12. Man's life is so short, that Austin doubteth whether to call it a dying life, or a living death. Man's life is but the shadow of smoke, the dream of a shadow. This present life is not *vita, sed via ad vitam*, life, but a motion, a journey towards life (*Bernard.*) The life of a Christian is rather *via* than *vita*, a step towards life, than life. Yet do I believe that that is not a death, but life, that joins the dying man to Christ; and that is not a life, but death, that separates the living man from Christ.

I know I shall not speak long to friends, saints, or sinners; therefore I was the more willing to take the opportunity of preaching to you when I am dead. As Abel by his faith, he being dead, yet speaketh, Heb. xi. 4, so this treatise may speak and live, when I shall return to my long home, and fall asleep in the bosom of Christ.[2] Christ his prophets and apostles, though they are now in heaven, yet by their doctrines, examples, and writings, they still preach to the saints on earth.

Zisca desired his skin might serve the Bohemians in their wars, when his body could no more do it. Oh that poor I, that have been but a little serviceable to the saints in my life, might by this, and my former weak labours, be much serviceable to them after my death! Books may preach, when the author cannot, when the author may not, when the author dares, yea, and which is more, when the author is, not.[3]

Sixthly, To testify my cordial love and affection to all the true lovers of Christ, and to let them know that they are all, though under different forms, precious in my eyes, and very near and dear unto my heart. I bless God I am, and I desire more and more to be, one with every one that is one with Christ, Philip. iv. 21; Col. i. 4; 2 Thess. i. 3. I would fain have as free, as large, and as sweet a heart towards saints, as Christ hath. For a wolf to worry a lamb is usual, but for a lamb to worry a

[1] Every unsettled Christian is *Magor-missabib*, a terror to himself, yea, his life is a very hell; fears and doubts are his chiefest companions, and so he judges himself unfit and unworthy to live, and yet he is afraid to die; and verily this is the sad condition of most Christians.

[2] Eccles. xii. 5; Acts vii. 60.

[3] A reminiscence from Thomas Adams. See Index, *sub nomine*.—G.

lamb is unnatural; for Christ's lilies to be among thorns, is ordinary, but for these lilies to become thorns, to tear and fetch blood of one another, is monstrous and strange.[1] Ah, Christians! can Turks and Pagans agree? can Herod and Pilate agree? can Moab and Ammon agree? can bears and lions, can wolves and tigers agree? yea, which is more, can a legion of devils agree in one body? and shall not the saints, whom heaven must hold at last, agree?

Pancirolus tells us, that the most precious pearl the Romans had, was called *unio*.[2] Oh the union of saints is an unvaluable pearl! The heathen man, by the light of nature, could say, 'That the thickest wall of a city in peace, and the safest rampire[3] in war, is unity. Verily all saints are one in Christ, all saints partake of the same spirit, promises, graces, and privileges. All saints are fellow-members, fellow-soldiers, fellow-travellers, fellow-heirs, fellow-sufferers, and fellow-citizens; and therefore I cannot, dare not but love them all, and prize them all; and to evidence it, I have dedicated this treatise to the service of their souls.

Seventhly and lastly, To fence and fortify the souls of real, serious Christians against those brain-sick notions, and those airy speculations, and imaginary revelations, and enthusiastical fancies, &c., with which many are sadly deluded and deceived, even to their eternal overthrow, I had almost said.

Thus have I given you a brief account of the reasons that have prevailed with me to publish this treatise to the world, and to dedicate it to yourselves.[4] Let your hearts dwell on truth, as the bee doth upon the flower; every truth being a flower of paradise that is more worth than a world.

Now the God of all grace fill your hearts and souls with all the fruits of righteousness and holiness, that you may attain unto a full assurance of your everlasting happiness and blessedness; which that you may is the sincere, earnest, and constant desire of him who is your soul's servant,

THOMAS BROOKS.

[1] Marcellinus, a heathen historian, taxeth the Christians of his time for their dissensions, biting and devouring one another, till they were even consumed one of another: a sad thing that a heathen should see such miscarriages among Christ's followers.

[2] Cap. vii. de *Gemmis*. [Pancirolus died 1599.—G]

[3] Rampart = defence. Yet another Shakesperian word: Timon of Athens, V. 5.—G.

[4] I had not thought to have pressed into the press, had I not been soundly pressed thereunto.

THE PREFACE,

TOUCHING THE NATURE OF ASSURANCE.

To be in a state of true grace, is to be miserable no more; it is to be happy for ever. A soul in this state is a soul near and dear to God. It is a soul much beloved, and very highly valued of God. It is a soul housed in God. It is a soul safe in everlasting arms. It is a soul fully and eminently interested in all the highest and noblest privileges.[1] The being in a state of grace makes a man's condition happy, safe, and sure; but the seeing, the knowing of himself to be in such a state, is that which renders his life sweet and comfortable. The being in a state of grace will yield a man a heaven hereafter, but the seeing of himself in this state will yield him both a heaven here and a heaven hereafter; it will render him doubly blest, blest in heaven, and blest in his own conscience.[2]

Now assurance is a reflex act of a gracious soul, whereby he clearly and evidently sees himself in a gracious, blessed, and happy state; it is a sensible feeling, and an experimental discerning of a man's being in a state of grace, and of his having a right to a crown of glory; and this rises from the seeing in himself the special, peculiar, and distinguishing graces of Christ, in the light of the Spirit of Christ,[3] or from the testimony and report of the Spirit of God, 'the Spirit bearing witness with his spirit, that he is a son, and an heir-apparent to glory', Rom. viii. 16, 17.

It is one thing for me to have grace, it is another thing for me to see my grace; it is one thing for me to believe, and another thing for me to believe that I do believe; it is one thing for me to have faith, and another thing for me to know that I have faith. Now assurance flows from a clear, certain, evident knowledge that I have grace, and that I do believe, &c.[4]

Now this assurance is the beauty and top[5] of a Christian's glory in

[1] Ps. cxliv. 15; Mal. iii. 17; Rom. viii. 16, 17: Deut. xxxiii. 26, 27; 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

[2] A man may be God's, and yet not know it; his estate may be good, and yet he not see it, Eph. i. 13; 1 John v. 13; Gal. iv. 6.

[3] A man cannot see the sun, but by the light of the sun.

[4] It is one thing to be an heir, and another thing to know that one is an heir. The child in the womb or in the arms, may be an heir to a crown, and yet understands it not.

[5] See *Glossary, sub voce.*—G.

this life. It is usually attended with the strongest joy, with the sweetest comforts, and with the greatest peace. It is a pearl that most want, a crown that few wear. His state is safe and happy, whose soul is adorned with grace, though he sees it not, though he knows it not.

Assurance is not of the essence of a Christian. It is required to the *bene esse*, to the well-being, to the comfortable and joyful being of a Christian; but it is not required to the *esse*, to the being of a Christian. A man may be a true believer, and yet would give all the world, were it in his power, to know that he is a believer. To have grace, and to be sure that we have grace, is glory upon the throne, it is heaven on this side heaven. But more of these things you will find in the following discourse, to which I refer you.

A SERIOUS DISCOURSE, TOUCHING A WELL-GROUNDED ASSURANCE.

CHAPTER I.

Shewing that believers may in this life attain unto a well-grounded assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness.

First, The ground on which the apostle Paul builds his assurance, is not any special revelation, but such a foundation as is common to all believers, as clearly appears from

Rom. viii. 32–34, *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

It is clear from these words, that this blessed apostle had not that glorious assurance that he speaks of in the two last verses of this chapter by immediate revelation,[1] for he concludes it from such arguments as are general or common to all the godly; and therefore it roundly follows,

First, That believers may in this life attain unto a well-grounded assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness. So Hezekiah's assurance did spring from a principle that is common to all believers, 2 Kings xx. 3. *Ergo,—*

Secondly, It is the very scope and end of the Scripture to help believers to a well-grounded assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness. 'These things,' saith John, 'have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life,' 1 John v. 13. These precious souls did believe, and they had eternal life, in respect of the promise of eternal life, Titus i. 2, and in respect of Christ their head, who had taken up their rooms

[1] Immediate revelations are fleeting and inconstant; and therefore men had need be careful how they build upon them.

aforehand in heaven, and who as a public person doth represent all his people, Eph. ii. 6; and they had eternal life in respect of the beginnings of it; for what is grace but glory begun? and what is glory but grace perfected? Grace is glory in the bud, and glory is grace at the full. Now, though they had eternal life in all these respects, yet they did not know it; though they did believe, yet they did not believe that they did believe; therefore the apostle, in those precious epistles of his, doth make it his business, by variety and plenty of arguments, to help all, but especially such as are weak in the faith, to a well-grounded assurance of their eternal welfare.[1]

It is the very drift and design of the whole Scripture, to bring souls first to an acquaintance with Christ, and then to an acceptance of Christ, and then to build them up in a sweet assurance of their actual interest in Christ: which made Luther to say, 'That he would not live in paradise, if he might, without the word, but with the word he could live in hell itself.'[2] No histories are comparable to the histories of the Scripture for,

1, Antiquity; 2, rarity; 3, variety; 4, brevity; 5, perspicuity; 6, harmony; 7, verity.

The word evidences truth, it evinces falsehood; it fights against folly, it opens the bowels of mercy, and it assures believing souls of eternal felicity. That is a precious word in Heb. vi. 18.[3] God hath given us his word, his oath, his seal, that our consolation may be strong, and that our salvation may be sure. Now, what comfort can a believer have without assurance? It is the assurance of my interest in the land of Canaan, in gospel-cordials, in precious promises, and in a precious Christ, that comforts and delights my soul. It is not enough to raise strong consolation in my soul, barely to know that there are mines of gold, mountains of pearl, heaps of treasures, a land flowing with milk and honey, but it is the knowledge of my interest in these that raises joy in my soul. To know that there are such things, and that I have no interest in them, is rather a vexation than a consolation to me; to know that there is a feast of choicest delicates, but not a taste for me; that there are pleasant fountains and streams, but I must perish for thirst in a wilderness; to know that there are royal robes for such and such, but I must die in my rags; to know that there is a pardon for such and such, but I must be turned off the ladder of life; to know that there is preferment for such and such, but I must still lie with Lazarus at Dives' door; such knowledge as this may well add to my vexation, but it will not add to my consolation.[4]

It was rather matter of sorrow than joy to the men of the old world, to know that there was an ark, when they were shut out; and to the Israelites, to know that there was a brazen serpent set up, whereby others were cured, when they died with the stinging of the fiery ser-

[1] Surely glory is nothing else but a bright constellation of graces; happiness is nothing but the quintesence of holiness.

[2] Gregory calls the Scripture, *cor et animam Dei*, the heart and soul of God. *Adoro plenitudinem Scripturarum*, I adore the fulness of the Scripture.—*Tertullian.* [For Gregory of Nazianzum, see *Oratio Secunda*, Sec. cv.; Tertullian, Apolog., *et alibi.*—G.]

[3] Assurance produces such strong consolations, as swallows up all worldly griefs. As Moses' serpent did the sorcerers' serpents, or as the fire doth the fuel.

[4] *Non in bonorum cognitione, sed fruitione.*

pents.[1] So how can it comfort me to know that there is peace in Christ, and pardon in Christ, and righteousness in Christ, and riches in Christ, and happiness in Christ, &c., for others, but none for me! Ah, this knowledge will rather be a hell to torment me than a ground of joy and comfort to me. But now God hath in the Scripture discovered who they are that shall be eternally happy, and how they may reach to an assurance of their felicity and glory; which made one [Luther] to say, 'That he would not take all the world for one leaf of the Bible.'[2] The Bible is a Christian's *magna charta*, his chief evidence for heaven. Men highly prize, and carefully keep their charters, privileges, conveyances, and assurances of their lands; and shall not the saints much more highly prize, and carefully keep in the closet of their hearts, the precious word of God, which is to them instead of all assurances for their maintenance, deliverance, protection, confirmation, consolation, and eternal salvation.[3]

Thirdly, Other believers have in an ordinary way attained to a sweet assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness. 'We know,' saith the apostle, in the name of the saints, 'that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven,' 2 Cor. v. 1, 2.[4] Their assurance sets them in triumph upon the throne. We have a house, a house above, a house in heaven, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. We have a house, a heavenly house, a house made by the greatest wisdom and the highest love; a house, that for honour, pleasures, riches, safety, stability, glory, and perpetuity, transcends all the royal palaces in the world. It is a house 'not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens.'

So the church: Solomon's Song ii. 16, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his.' I know, says the spouse, that Jesus Christ is mine. I can with the greatest confidence and boldness affirm it: he is my head, my husband, my Lord, my Redeemer, my Justifier, my Saviour; 'and I am his. I am as sure that I am his, as I am sure that I live. I am his by purchase, and I am his by conquest; I am his by donation, and I am his by election; I am his by covenant, and I am his by marriage. I am wholly his; I am peculiarly his; I am universally his; I am eternally his. This I well know, and the knowledge thereof is my joy in life, and my strength and crown in death.[5] So the church: Isa. lxiii. 16, 'Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not. Thou, O Lord, art our Father, and our Redeemer,

[1] Spira cried out, Christ is to me a grief, a torment, because I despised him, I rejected him, and I have no part in him. [The 'Life' and 'fearful death' of Spira, is a chapbook to this day. Cf Sibbes's Works, vol. iii. p. 533, note *qq*.—G.]

[2] This, like most of Brooks's sayings of Luther, is a reminiscence from that favourite Puritan folio, Captain Bell's 'Colloquia Mensalia,' 1652. This reference may serve once for all.—G.

[3] Ps. cxix. 11 and 72 compared.

[4] *Nec Christus nec cœlum patitur hyperbolem*, neither Christ nor heaven can be hyperbolised.

[5] Eph. i. 22, 23; 1 Cor. i. 30, vi. 20; Ps. cx. 3; John x. 29, xv. 16; Ezek. xvi. 8; Hos. ii. 19, 20.

thy name is from everlasting.'[1] David could say, 'The Lord is my portion for ever,' Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26; and at another time he could sweetly sing it out, 'I am thine, save me!' Ps. cxix. 94. Job could look through the darkest cloud, and see that his Redeemer lives, Job xix. 25. Thomas cries out, 'My Lord, and my God!' John xx. 28. And Paul trumpets it out, 'That nothing should separate him from the love of Christ,' Rom. viii. 38, 39; and that he had 'fought a good fight, and finished his course; and that there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness,' 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

By what hath been said, it clearly appears that other believers have obtained assurance in an ordinary way, and therefore believers now may attain to a sweet assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness.[2] Certainly, God is as loving, and his bowels of compassion are as strong towards believers now, as ever they were to believers of old; and it makes as much for the honour of God, the lifting up of Christ, the stopping of the mouths of the wicked, and the rejoicing of the hearts of the righteous, for God to give assurance now, as it did for God to give it then.[3]

Fourthly, God hath by promise engaged himself to assure his people of their happiness and blessedness. 'The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly,' Ps. lxxxiv. 11. If he will withhold no good thing, then certainly he will not always withhold assurance, which is the great good thing, the only thing, the chiefest thing, the peculiar thing that believers seek after. So Ezek. xxxiv. 30, 31, 'Thus shall they know that I the Lord their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord God. And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God.' So John xiv. 21, 23, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.' 'If any man love me,' saith Christ, 'he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' Now hath the Lord spoken it, and shall it not come to pass? Men say and unsay, they eat their words as soon as they have spoken them, but will God do so? Surely no, he is faithful that hath promised,[4] 'All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen,' 2 Cor. i. 20; that is, they are stable and firm, and shall really be made good. The promises are a precious book, every leaf drops myrrh and mercy, therefore sit down and suck at these breasts, warm thyself at this fire.[5] God hath been always as good as his word, yea, he hath sometimes

[1] Vide Calvin.

[2] *Quicquid fieri potuit, potest*, that which hath been done may be done.

[3] Heb. xiii. 8; Rev. i. 8, 11. Plato, a heathen, saith that God is one and the same, and always like himself. [See Grote's 'Plato and his Friends,' and Index under Grote. —G.]

[4] Antiochus promised often, but seldom gave; but God gives as much, and as often as he promiseth. He hath a king's heart, as well as a king's purse. *Nil Deo difficile*, there is nothing hard for God. Tully, a heathen, frequently called God *Optimum maximum*, the best and greatest. Plato called God, the horn of plenty, and the ocean of beauty, without the least spot of injustice. [As *supra*.—G.]

[5] Isa. lxiv. 4; 1 Cor. ii. 9; Ps. xxi. 3; Isa. lxv. 24.

been better than his word; he hath ever performed, and he hath over performed. He promised the children of Israel only the land of Canaan, but he gave them, besides the whole land of Canaan, two other kingdoms which he never promised, Ah! how often hath God prevented us with his blessings, and hath given us in such mercies as have been as far beyond our hopes as our deserts. How hath God, in these days of darkness and blood, gone beyond the prayers, desires, hopes, and confidences of his people in this land, and beyond what we could read in the book of the promises.[1] Satan promises the best, but pays with the worst: he promises honour and pays with disgrace, he promises pleasure and pays with pain, he promises profit and pays with loss, he promises life and pays with death; but God pays as he promises, all his payments are made in pure gold; therefore take these promises wherein God hath engaged himself to assure thee of his love, and spread them before the Lord, and tell him that it makes as well for his honour as thy comfort, for his glory as for thy peace, that he should assure thee of thy everlasting happiness and blessedness.

Fifthly, There is in all the saints the springs of assurance, and therefore they may attain to assurance.

Precious faith is one spring of assurance, and this is in all the saints, though in different degrees, 2 Peter i. 1. 'Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained[2] like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.' Faith in time will, of its own accord, raise and advance itself to assurance. Faith is an appropriating grace; it looks upon God, and saith with David, 'This God is my God for ever and ever, and he shall be my guide unto the death,' Ps. xlviii. 14. It looks upon Christ, and saith with the spouse, 'I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me,' Cant. vii. 10. It looks upon an immortal crown, and saith with Paul, 'Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of glory,' 2 Tim. iv. 8. It looks upon the righteousness of Christ, and saith, 'This righteousness is mine to cover me.' It looks upon the mercy of Christ, and saith, 'This mercy is mine to pardon me.' It looks upon the power of Christ, and saith, 'This power is mine to support me.' It looks upon the wisdom of Christ, and saith, 'This wisdom is mine to direct me.' It looks upon the blood of Christ, and says, 'This blood is mine to save me,' &c.[3]

As faith, so hope is another spring of assurance. Col. i. 27, 'Christ in you,' saith Paul, 'the hope of glory.' So Heb. vi. 19, 'Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.' Hope taketh fast hold upon heaven itself, upon the *sanctum sanctorum*. A Christian's hope is not like that of Pandora, which may fly out of the box, and bid the soul farewell, as the hope of hypocrites do; no, it is like the morning light, the least

[1] Vives reports of a Jew, that having gone over a deep river on a narrow plank, in a dark night, and coming next day to see what danger he had escaped, fell down dead with astonishment. Ah, the astonishing mercies that we have had in these late years!

[2] λαχοῦσι, obtained by lot. [Cf. Joshua xiv. 2; xv. 1, *et seq.*—G.]

[3] I may say of faith, as Luther says of prayer: it hath a kind of omnipotency in it, it is able to do all things. *Est quædam omnipotentia precum. Tantum possumus, quantum credimus.*—Cyprian. [See this father in Index under *preces.*—G.]

beam of it shall commence into a complete sunshine; it shall shine brighter and brighter till perfect day.[1]

When Alexander went upon a hopeful expedition, he gave away his gold; and when he was asked what he kept for himself, he answered, *Spem majorum et meliorum*, the hope of greater and better things. So a Christian will part with anything rather than with his hope; he knows that hope will keep the heart both from aching and breaking, from fainting and sinking; he knows that hope is a beam of God, a spark of glory, and that nothing shall extinguish it till the soul be filled with glory. Souls that are big in hope, will not be long without sweet assurance. God loves not to see the hoping soul go always up and down sighing and mourning for want of a good word from heaven, for want of possessing what it hopes in time to enjoy. Hold out hope and patience 'a little longer, and he that hath promised to come, will come, and will not tarry,' Heb. x. 37, *μικρὸν ὅσον, ὅσον*.

Again, A good conscience is another spring of assurance: 2 Cor. i. 12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards.' So 1 John iii. 21, 'Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.' A good conscience hath sure confidence; he that hath it sits, Noah-like, in the midst of all combustions and distractions, [in] sincerity and serenity, uprightness and boldness. A good conscience and a good confidence go together.[2]

What the probationer-disciple said to our Saviour, Mat. viii. 19, 'Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest,' that a good conscience says to the believing soul. I will follow thee from duty to duty, from ordinance to ordinance; I will stand by thee, I will strengthen thee, I will uphold thee, I will be a comfort to thee in life, and a friend to thee in death; 'though all should leave thee, yet I will never forsake thee,' Mat. xxvi. 35. A good conscience will look through the blackest clouds, and see a smiling God.[3] Look, as an evil conscience is attended with the greatest fears and doubts, so a good conscience is attended with the greatest clearness and sweetness. And as there is no hell in this world to an evil conscience, so there is no heaven in this world to a good conscience. He that hath a good conscience hath one of the choicest springs of assurance, and it will not be long before God will whisper such a man in the ear, and say unto him, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee,' Mat. ix. 2.[4]

Again, real love to the saints is another spring of assurance, and this spring is a never-failing spring. This spring is in the weakest as well as in the strongest saints: 1 John iii. 14, 'We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.' The apostle doth not say, We think, we hope, &c., that we are translated from death to life, but, 'we

[1] A saint's motto is *Spero meliora*; the hypocrite's hope is like the morning dew, Job viii. 13, 14.

[2] *Tolle conscientiam, tolle omnia. Conscientia pura semper secura.*

[3] It is a notable speech of Salvi, Such as are truly blessed in their own consciences, cannot be miserable by the false judgments of others. [Query, Salvian?—G.]

[4] Innocency is bulwark enough, if you be not guilty, saith Seneca. ['Epistles' and 'Blessed Life' often.—G.]

know' that we are translated from death to life, because we love the brethren.[1] Love to the brethren is not the cause of our passing from death to life, that is, from a natural state to a spiritual state, from hell to heaven, but an evidence thereof. I confess it is very sad to consider how this precious stream of love is even dried up in many.

It was wont to be a proverb, *Homo homini deus*, one man is a god to another; but now it may be truly said, *Homo homini dæmon*, one man is a devil to another.[2] He that wants love to his brethren, wants one of the sweetest springs from whence assurance flows. A greater hell I would not wish any man, than to live and not to love the beloved of God.

Now is it not as easy a thing as it is pleasant, for a man that hath several sweet springs in his garden, to sit down, draw water, and drink? John iv. 14. O believing souls! there are springs, there are wells of living water not only near you, but in you; why, then, do you, with Hagar, sit down sorrowing and weeping, Gen. xxi. 15–19, when you should be a-tasting or a drinking not only of the springs above you, but also of the springs within you? A man that hath fruit in his garden may both delight his eye and refresh his spirit with tasting of it, Gal. v. 22, 23. Certainly we may both eye and taste the fruits of the Spirit in us, they being the first-fruits of eternal life. I think none but mad souls will say that grace is that forbidden fruit that God would have us neither see nor taste. We ought not so to mind a Christ in heaven, as not to mind 'Christ in us the hope of glory,' Col. i. 27. Christ would not have his spouse so to mind her own blackness, as to forget that she is all fair and glorious within, Cant. i. 5, iv. 7, and Ps. xlv. 11.

Sixthly, The Holy Ghost exhorts us 'to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure,' 2 Pet. i. 10, and presses us to look to the obtaining of a 'full assurance.' Therefore believers may attain unto an assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness: 'Wherefore the rather, brethren,' saith the apostle, 'give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if you do these things, you shall never fall.' The Greek word[3] translated 'give diligence' signifieth two things: (1.) All possible haste and speed; (2.) All manner of seriousness and intention in doing. Make it your main business, your chiefest study, your greatest care, to 'make your calling and election sure,' saith the apostle.[4] When this is done, your all is done. Till this be done, there is nothing done. And to shew the necessity, utility, excellency, and possibility of it, the apostle puts a 'rather' upon it: 'Wherefore the rather give all diligence to make your calling and election sure;' or, as it is in the original, 'firm or stable.'[5] It is the one thing necessary; it is of an internal and eternal concernment to make firm and sure work for your souls. Assurance is a jewel of that worth, a pearl of that price, that he that will have it must work, and sweat, and weep, and wait to obtain it. He must not only use diligence, but he must use all dili-

[1] Οἴδαμεν, to know certainly; we are as certain of it as we are certain that we live.

[2] Or, *homo homini leo*, one man is a lion to another.

[3] Σπουδάσατε. Vide *Beza* and *Jansen*.

[4] Luther saith he had rather obey than work miracles.

[5] Βεβαιάν, firm or stable. God loves *curristas*, not *quæristas*, the runner, not the questioner. He is taken most with them that are more for motion than notion, for doing than talking,

gence; not only dig, but he must dig deep, before he can come to this golden mine. Assurance is that 'white stone,' that 'new name,' that hidden manna, that none can obtain but such as labour for it as for life. Assurance is such precious gold, that a man must win it before he can wear it. Win gold, and wear gold, is the language both of heaven and earth.

The riches, honours, languages, and favours of this world cannot be obtained without much trouble and travel, without rising early and going to bed late, and do you think that assurance, which is more worth than heaven and earth, can be obtained by cold, lazy, heartless services?[1] If you do, you do but deceive your own souls. There are five things that God will never sell at a cheap rate,—Christ, truth, his honour, heaven, and assurance. He that will have these must pay a good price for them, or go for ever without them.[2]

And as Peter exhorts you to 'give all diligence to make your calling and election sure,' so Paul presseth you to look to the obtaining of full assurance, which does clearly evidence that there is a possibility of attaining unto a full assurance of our happiness and blessedness in this life. And 'we desire,' saith the apostle, 'that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end, that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises,' Heb. vi. 11, 12.[3] We must not only strive after assurance, but we must strive and shew all diligence to the attaining of that rich and full assurance which will scatter all fears and doubts, which will make a soul patient in waiting, courageous in doing, and cheerful in suffering, and which will make a heaven in a man's heart on this side heaven, and make him go singing into paradise, in despite of all calamities and miseries.[4] And certainly it can never stand with the holiness, righteousness, faithfulness, and goodness of God, to put his people upon making their calling and election sure, and upon obtaining full assurance, if there were not a possibility of obtaining a full and well-grounded assurance of their happiness and blessedness in this life;[5] and therefore it doth undeniably follow that they may attain unto a blessed assurance of their felicity and glory whilst they are in this vale of misery. The contrary opinion will make a man's life a hell here, though he should escape a hell hereafter.

Seventhly, The Lord hath, in much mercy and love, propounded in his word the ways and means whereby believers may obtain a well-grounded assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness; and therefore it may be obtained. Take three scriptures to evidence this.

The first is in 2 Peter i. 13. If you turn to the words, you shall find that the Lord does not only press them to 'give all diligence to make their calling and election sure;' but he shews them plainly the way and means whereby this may be done, namely, by adding 'to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge,' &c.

[1] Ps. cxxvii. 1, 2; Luke v. 5; Prov xiv, 23.

[2] *Qui fecit te sine te, non salvibit te sine te.*—Augustine. [Confessions, I., *et alibi.*—G.]

[3] Vide *Calvin* and *Piscator* on the text.

[4] *Præcepta docent, exempla movent;* precepts may instruct, but examples do persuade. See from verses 13 to 19 of this chapter. [Hebrews vi.]

[5] It was a good saying, *Da quod jubes et jube quod vis.* [Augustine, *Confessions*, I., &c. &c.—G.]

The second scripture is that 1 Cor. xi. 28, 'But let a man examine himself; and so let eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.' By examination the soul comes to see what right it hath to Christ and all the precious things of his house; and believingly to eat so of that bread of life, that heavenly manna, as that it may live for ever.

The third scripture is that 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 'Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove yourselves; know ye not your own selves how that Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?' or unapproved, or rejected.[1] By a serious examination of a man's own estate, he may know whether he hath faith or not, whether he be Christ's spouse or the devil's strumpet, whether there be a work of grace upon his heart or not. And certainly it cannot stand with the glorious wisdom, unspotted righteousness, and transcendent holiness of God, to put men upon the use of such and such means in order to the obtaining of such and such an end, if that end could not be obtained by the use of the means prescribed, Exodus xv. 11. Man, that hath but a spark of that wisdom, righteousness, and holiness that is in God, will not put any upon the use of such or such means for the obtaining of health, wealth, or the like, unless there be a proper tendency in the use of those means prescribed to reach such ends.[2] And will God, who is wisdom, righteousness, and holiness in the abstract? Surely no. God is one infinite perfection in himself,[3] which is eminently and virtually all perfections of the creatures; and therefore it is impossible that God should act below the creature, which he should do if he should put the creature upon the use of those means that would not reach the ends for which the means were used.

Thus you see clearly by this seventh argument that believers may in this life attain to a well-grounded assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness.

Eighthly, It was the principal end of Christ's institution of the sacrament of the supper that he might assure them of his love, and that he might seal up to them the forgiveness of their sins, the acceptation of their persons, and the salvation of their souls, Mat. xxvi. 27, 28. The nature of a seal is to make things sure and firm among men; so the supper of the Lord is Christ's broad seal, it is Christ's privy-seal, whereby he seals and assures his people that they are happy here, that they shall be more happy hereafter, that they are everlastingly beloved of God, that his heart is set upon them, that their names are written in the book of life, that there is laid up for them a crown of righteousness, and that nothing shall be able to separate them from him who is their light, their life, their crown, their all in all.[4]

In this sacrament Christ comes forth and shews his love, his heart, his bowels, his blood, that his children may no longer say, Doth the Lord Jesus love us? doth he delight in us? &c.; but that they may say with the spouse, 'I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me,' Cant. vii. 10.[5] Many precious Christians there are that have lain long

[1] δοκιμάζετε, as the goldsmith does the gold in the fire. ἀδόκιμοι, *i. e.* unapproved or counterfeit; not reprobates, as it is translated.—*Vide Grotius.* [Cf. Plato, Legg. 742, *a.*—G.]

[2] Job xxxviii. 5, 18, 21, 33 verses compared.

[3] Abstracts do better express God than concretes and adjectives.

[4] Daniel vi. 8; Mat. xxvii. 66; 2 Tim. iv. 8; Col. iii. 11.

[5] תשוקתו His desirous affection is towards me, as the wife's is towards her dearest husband. So the Hebrew word signifies.

under fears and doubts, sighing and mourning; that have run from minister to minister, and from one duty to another, &c., and yet could never be persuaded of the love of Christ to their poor souls; but still their fears and doubts have followed them, till they have waited upon the Lord in this glorious ordinance, by which the Lord hath assured them of the remission of their sins, and the salvation of their souls. In this ordinance God hath given them manna to eat, and a white stone, and new name, which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it, Rev. ii. 17. Tell me, ye precious, believing souls, whether you have not found God in this ordinance often whispering of you in the ear, saying, 'Sons and daughters, be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you'? Mat. ix. 2. I know you have.

Those scriptures that do expressly require saints to be abundant and constant in rejoicing and in praising of God, to have always harps in their hands, and hallelujahs in their mouths, do clearly evidence that believers may attain to a well-grounded assurance in this life.[1] How can they rejoice and glory in God, that do not know whether he will be an everlasting friend or an everlasting enemy to them, whether he will always breathe out love or wrath upon them? How can they but hang their harps on the willows, that do not know but that they may live in a strange land, Ps. cxxxvii. 2; yea, in a land of darkness all their days? How can they be cheerful or thankful, that do not know but that they may at last hear that heart-breaking, that conscience-wounding, that soul-slaying word, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,' Mat. xxv. 41. Now, there is no duty in the whole book of God that is more frequently and abundantly pressed upon believers than this of joy and rejoicing, of praise and thanksgiving, as all know that know anything of the Scripture: 1 Thes. v. 16, 'Rejoice evermore.' God would not have his children always a-putting finger in the eye. Ah, Christians! remember what Christ hath done for you, and what he is still a-doing for you in heaven, and what he will do for you to all eternity, and spend your days in whining and mourning if you can.[2] Ps. xxxii. 11, 'Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.' Ps. xxxiii. 1, 'Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright.'[3] Christians, are not your mercies greater than your miseries? Yes. Are your greatest sufferings comparable to the least spark of grace or beam of glory revealed in you or to you? No. Will not one hour's being in the bosom of Christ recompense you for all your trouble and travail? Yes. Why, then, do you spend more time in sighing than in rejoicing; and why do you, by your not rejoicing, sad those precious hearts that God would not have sadded, and glad those graceless hearts that God would not have gladded?[4]

[1] *Nulla verior miseria quam falsa lætitia*, there is no truer misery than false joys.

[2] It would even be an endless business to cite every scripture wherein this duty is enjoined. It is a duty that is much pressed in both Testaments, and as little practised by all whimpering Christians.

[3] The word noteth a fair and comely grace, for which a thing is to be liked and desired. —*Ainsworth.* [Henry Ainsworth, 'Annotations on the Bible,' 2 vols. folio, 1627. He died 1622.—G.]

[4] *Æterna erit exultatio quæ bono lætatur æterno*, their joy lasts for ever whose object remains for ever.

A beautiful face is at all times pleasing to the eye, but then especially when there is joy manifested in the countenance. Joy in the face puts a new beauty, and makes that which before was beautiful to be exceeding beautiful. It puts a lustre and glory upon beauty; so does joy in the face, heart, and life of a Christian, cast a general splendour and glory upon him, and the ways of God wherein he walks. The joy of the Lord is not only the strength, but also the beauty and glory of Christians, Neh. viii. 10.

Joy and rejoicing is a consequent and effect of assurance, as many believers by experience find; and therefore, without all peradventure, believers may attain unto a well-grounded assurance of their everlasting happiness, else it is impossible that they should 'rejoice evermore;' so that by this argument, as by the former, it clearly appears that believers may in this life be assured of their eternal well-being.[1]

Tenthly, The *tenth* and last argument, to prove that believers may in this life attain to a well-grounded assurance, is this, *That God would never have made such a broad difference in the Scripture between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, between the righteous and the wicked, between saints and sinners, between sons and slaves, sheep and goats, between lions and lambs, between wheat and chaff, light and darkness, &c., if it were impossible for men to know which of these two estates they are in.*[2] Therefore they may know whether they are in a state of life or in a state of death, in a state of misery or in a state of felicity, in a state of wrath or in a state of love, Mat. xiii. 1, *seq.* Oh! it is much below the grace of God, it is repugnant to the wisdom of God, to make such a wide difference between his own children and Satan's, John viii. 44, if it were not possible for every child to know his own father. 'Thou shalt call me my father.' Isa. lxiii. 16, 'Doubtless thou art my Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our Father and Redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.'[3] The weakest saint can say, 'Abba, Father,' Rom. viii. 15; the Lord will not leave his children comfortless, or as orphans, and fatherless children, as it is in the Greek.[4] Though the salvation of believers do not depend upon their knowledge of God to be their father, yet their consolation does; therefore the Lord will not be only a father to Israel, but he will make Israel know that he is his father: Jer. iii. 4, 'Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?'[5]

By these ten arguments it doth evidently appear, that believers may in this life attain unto a well-grounded assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness. I shall apply this a little, and then close up this chapter.

Use. This precious truth thus proved, looks sourly and wishly[6] upon

[1] Mrs Kath. Brettergh, under the power of assurance, cries out, Oh the joys, the joys, the inconceivable joys my heart is filled with. [See Index under Brettergh, for former note on.—G.]

[2] Gen. iii. 15; Ezek. xviii. 19, *seq.*; Mat. xxv. 1, *seq.*; Mat. iii. 12; 2 Cor. vi. 14.

[3] The saints' motto is, *Tam pius nemo, tam pater nemo*, No father is like our Father.

[4] John xiv. 18, ὀρφανούς. God hath no child so young, but can more or less call him Father.

[5] We say he is a wise child that knows his father; such wise ones believers are.

[6] 'With eager desire,' an early form of 'wistfully.'—G. Qu. Is it not rather connected with weak, sour wine? *Wishy-washy* is a colloquial compound.—ED.

all those that affirm that believers cannot in this life attain unto a certain well-grounded assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness,—as papists and Arminians: all know that know their writings and teachings, that they are in arms against this Christ-exalting, and soul-cheering doctrine of assurance. 'I know no such thing as assurance of heaven in this life,' saith Grevinchovius the Arminian.[1] Assurance is a pearl that they trample under feet; it is a beam of heaven that hath so much light, brightness, and shining glory in it, that their blear-eyes cannot behold it. Assurance is glory in the bud, it is the suburbs of paradise, it is a cluster of the land of promise, it is a spark of God, it is the joy and crown of a Christian; the greater is their impiety and folly that deny assurance, that cry down assurance under any names or notions whatsoever. They are rather tormenters than comforters that say, poor souls may know that there is a crown of righteousness, but they must not presume to know that they shall have the honour to wear that crown; and that makes God like King Xerxes, who crowned his steersman in the morning, and beheaded him in the evening of the same day.[2]

Arminians are not ashamed to say, that God may crown a man one hour, and uncrown him in the next; they blush not to say that a man may be happy and miserable, under love and under wrath, an heir of heaven and a firebrand of hell, a child of light and a child of darkness, and all in an hour. Oh what miserable comforters are these? What is this but to torment the weary soul? to dispirit the wounded spirit, and to make them most sad whom God would have most glad? Ah! how sad is it for men to affirm, that wounded spirits may know 'that the Sun of righteousness hath healing in his wings,' Mal. iv. 2; but they cannot be assured that they shall be healed. The hungry soul may know that there is bread enough in his Father's house, but cannot know that he shall taste of that bread, Luke xv. 17. The naked soul may know that Christ hath robes of righteousness to cover all spots, sores, defects, and deformities of it, but may not presume to know that Christ will put these royal robes upon it, Rev. iii. 18. The impoverished soul may know that there be unsearchable[3] riches in Christ, but cannot be assured that ever it shall partake of those riches, Eph. iii. 8. All that these men allow poor souls, is guesses and conjectures that it may be well with them. They will not allow souls to say with Thomas, 'My Lord, and my God,' John xx. 18; nor with Job to say, 'My Redeemer lives,' Job xix. 25; nor with the church, 'I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me,' Cant. vii. 10. And so they leave souls in a cloudy, questioning, doubting, hovering condition, hanging, like Mahomet's tomb at Mecca, between two loadstones;[4] or like Erasmus, as the papists paint him, hanging betwixt heaven and hell.[5] They make the poor soul a *Magor-missabib*, a terror to itself.

[1] *Sensum electionis ad gloriam in hac vita nullam agnosco.*—Grevinchov. [That is, Nicolas Grevinchovius: *Apologia*, 1617, 4to.—G.]

[2] (1.) Is the surety of the new covenant grown so poor? Heb. vii. 22. (2.) Is the promise now come to be yea and nay? 2 Cor. i. 20. (3.) Is the power of God grown so weak? 1 Peter i. 5. (4.) Is the decreeing will of God become immutable? [mutable?—G.] 2 Tim. ii. 19. (5.) Is the free, eternal, and everlasting love of God become changeable? Jer. xxxi. 3; John xiii. 1, that these things can be?

[3] ἀνεξιχνίαστον, not to be traced out. [Cf. Rom. xi. 33.—G.] [4] A *myth* that still lives,—G.

[5] The Protestant Reformers also, from the great scholar's lukewarmness.—G.

What more uncomfortable doctrine than this? What more soul-disquieting, and soul-unsettling doctrine than this? Thou art this moment in a state of life, thou mayest the next moment be in a state of death; thou art now gracious, thou mayest the next hour be graceless; thou art now in the promised land, yet thou mayest die in the wilderness; thou art to-day a habitation for God, thou mayest to-morrow be a synagogue of Satan; thou hast to-day received the white stone of absolution, thou mayest to-morrow receive the black stone of condemnation;[1] thou art now in thy Saviour's arms, thou mayest to-morrow be in Satan's paws; thou art now Christ's freeman, thou mayest to-morrow be Satan's bondman; thou art now a vessel of honour, thou mayest suddenly become a vessel of wrath; thou art now greatly beloved, thou mayest soon be as greatly loathed; this day thy name is fairly written in the book of life, to-morrow the book may be crossed, and thy name blotted out for ever. This is the Arminians' doctrine, and if this be not to keep souls in a doubting and trembling, and shivering condition, what is it? Well, Christians, remember this is your happiness and blessedness, that 'none can pluck you out of your Father's hand,' John x. 29; that you are 'kept,' as in a garrison, or as with a guard,[2] 'by the power of God through faith unto salvation,' 1 Peter i. 5. 'That the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but the kindness of the Lord shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on you,' Isa. liv. 10. 'That Christ ever lives to make intercession for you,' Heb. vii. 25; and that men and devils are as able, and shall as soon, make a world, dethrone God, pluck the sun out of the firmament, and Christ out of the bosom of the Father, as they shall pluck a believer out of the everlasting arms of Christ, or rob him of one of his precious jewels, Deut. xxxiii. 26, 27. I shall close up this chapter with an excellent saying of Luther: 'The whole Scripture,' saith he, 'doth principally aim at this thing, that we should not doubt, but that we should hope, that we should trust, that we should believe, that God is a merciful, a bountiful, a gracious, and a patient God to his people.'[3]

CHAPTER II.

Containing several weighty propositions concerning assurance.

The first proposition that I shall lay down concerning assurance is this, *That God denies assurance for a time to his dearest and choicest ones, and that upon many considerable grounds.*

(1.) As, first, *for the exercise of their grace.* A gracious soul would always be upon mount Tabor, looking into Canaan; he would always be in his Father's arms, and under his Father's smiles; he would always be in the sunshine of divine favour;[4] he would always have the heavens open, that he might always see his Christ and his crown; he would

[1] The heathens used to absolve men by giving them white stones, and condemn them by giving them black ones.

[2] φρουρουμένους, kept safe and fast, as in a strong garrison.

[3] See former footnote on this Treatise, and Index *sub nomine*.—G.

[4] *Tam pater nemo, tum pius nemo.*—Tertullian.

with Peter be always upon the mount; he is loath to walk through the valley of darkness, through the valley of Baca. As the king of Sodom said once to Abraham, 'Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself,' Gen. xiv. 21; so gracious souls are apt to say, Give me joy, give me peace, give me assurance, and do you take trials, afflictions, and temptations to yourselves. But pray, what use would there be of the stars, if the sun did always shine? Why, none. Why, no more use would there be of your graces, if assurance should be always continued; therefore the Lord, for the exercise of his children's faith, hope, patience, &c., is pleased, at least for a time, to deny them assurance, though they seek it by earnest prayer, and with a flood of penitent tears.[1]

(2.) The Lord denies assurance to his dearest ones, *that he may keep them in the exercise of those religious duties that are most costly and contrary to flesh and blood*, as to mourning, repenting, self-judging, self-loathing, self-abhorring, and self-searching; as Lam. i. 16, 'For these things I weep: mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me'; chap. iii. 2, 3, 'He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, not into light. Surely against me he is turned; he turneth his hand against me all the day'; ver. 17, 'And thou hast removed my soul far off from peace: I forgat prosperity.' Now, what this sad dealings of God puts the church upon you may see in ver. 40 .'Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.'[2] And if you look throughout the book, you shall find the church much in self-examining, self-judging, self-loathing, &c., upon this ground, that God had hid his face, and drawn a curtain between him and them, and stood at a distance from them, and would not speak comfortably and friendly to them.

Now, if you ask me why God will put his children upon those duties of religion that are most costly and contrary to flesh and blood? I answer,

1. That his strength and power may appear in their weakness, 2 Cor. xii. 7–9.

2. To discover not only the truth, but also the strength of their graces. A little grace will put a man upon those religious duties that are easy and pleasing to flesh and blood, and not chargeable, but rather profitable and pleasurable; but it must be strength of grace that puts man upon those services that are costly and cross to the old man.

3. That they may be more fully and eminently conformable to Christ their head, who, from first to last, who, even from the cradle to the cross, was most exercised in those duties and services that were most costly and cross to flesh and blood, as is most evident to all that study the writings of the Holy Ghost more than the writings of men.

4. Because in the performance of such duties they do in a more

[1] If saints should always have assurance, they would be too apt to say, *Bonum est esse hic*, it is good for us to be here.

[2] 'Bring back my soul,' or 'fetch again my soul,' *i. e.* comfort, refresh, and rejoice me as in former times. נחפשה ונחקרה. These two Hebrew words are joined together, to intimate to us that diligent, narrow, and accurate inquiry that they should make into their ways, to search as men do into the bowels of the earth, for the discovery of rich mines and treasures, which made one of the Rabbins cry out, *Veniat Messias at ego non videam*, let the Messiah come, but let not me see him. [See Index under *Rabbins* for former reference.—G.]

singular way bear up the name and credit, the honour and glory of God, Christ, and the gospel in the world; the very world will cry out, Ah, these are Christians indeed!

5. Because the more they are in the exercise of such duties, the greater at last will be their reward, Heb. xi. 7.

6. That Satan's plots and designs may be the better prevented, and the wicked world more justly condemned, who do not only despise the hardest duties of religion, but also neglect the easiest, Mat. xxv. 4–6.

(3.) The third reason why God denies assurance to his most precious ones, is that *they may be the more clearly and fully convinced of that exceeding sinfulness and bitterness that is in sin*, Jer. ii. 19.[1] Ah, Lord, says the soul that [is] sighing and mourning under the want of assurance, I see now that sin is not only evil, but the greatest evil in the world, in that it keeps me from an assurance of my interest in thee, who art the greatest good in the world, and from an assurance of that favour of thine that is better than life, and from the light of thy sweet countenance, that is better than corn, and wine, and oil; and from those joys and comforts that can only make a paradise in my soul, Ps. iv. 7, lxiii. 3, 4. Ah, Lord! now I find sin not only to be bitter, but to be the very quintessence of bitterness. Ah! no bitterness so bitter as sin, that keeps my soul from that sweet assurance, that is not only the top and crown of mercy, but also the sweetener of all mercy, misery, and glory.[2] Oh what unspeakable evil do I now see in that evil that keeps me from the most desirable good! Oh what bitterness do I now find in that which Satan, the world, and my own deluded heart told me I should find sweetness in![3] Ah, now I find by experience, that to be true, which long since the faithful messengers of the Lord have told me; viz., that sin debaseth the soul of man, that it defiles and pollutes the soul of man, that it renders the soul most unlike to God, who is *optimum maximum*, the best and greatest, who is *omnia super omnia*, all, and above all, and renders it most like to Satan, who is a very sea and sink of sin.[4] That it hath robbed the soul of the image of God, the holiness of God, the beauty of God, the glory of God, the righteousness of God, and that keeps the soul from wearing this golden chain of assurance.

(4.) A fourth reason why God denies assurance to his dearest ones, is, *because they seek assurance more for themselves, than they do for his honour and glory;* more that they may have joy without sorrow, comfort without torment, peace without trouble, sweet without bitter, light without darkness, and day without night, than that he may be exalted and admired, and his name alone made great and glorious in the world.[5]

Many Christians are like the bee that flies into the field to seek honey to eat, but brings it not into the master's hive. So they seek for

[1] Sin is *malum catholicum*, it is *æterna macula*, it is *corruptio optimi pessima*.

[2] This made one cry out, *Quid restat O peccator, nisi ut in tota vita tua deplores totam vitam tuam.* Oh! what then remains but in our whole life to lament the sins of our whole life.

[3] Heb. iii. 13, Sin hath its original from a deceitful subtle serpent, and is the ground of all the deceit in the world, and is the great cozener of souls.

[4] Yea, *peccatum est Deicidium*, sin is a killing of God.

[5] *Christus opera nostra non tam actibus quam finibus pensat.*—Zanchius. The glory of God must consume all other ends, as the sun puts out the light of the fire.

assurance, that they may feed upon that sweet honeycomb, more [than] to fill their Lord and master's hive with thanks and praise.

That servant that minds his wages more than his work, must not wonder if his master be slack in paying; no more should he that minds comfort more than obedience, that minds assurance more than divine honour, wonder that God delays the giving in of assurance, though it be sought with many prayers and tears. He that is most tender of God's honour, shall find by experience that God is most mindful of his comfort. God will not see that soul sit long in sackcloth and ashes, that makes it his business to set him up upon his throne. He that minds God's glory more than his own good, shall quickly find that God will even obscure his own glory to do him good. If we are not wanting to God's glory, he will not long be wanting to our joy.[1]

(5.) A fifth reason why God denies assurance to his children, is, *That when they have it, they may the more highly prize it, the more carefully keep it, the more wisely improve it, and the more affectionately and effectually bless God for it.* None sets such a price upon light, as he that hath lain long in a dungeon of darkness; so none sets such a price upon assurance, as those children of light that have walked most in spiritual darkness.[2] Ah! how sweet was the light to Jonah, that had been in the belly of hell, Jonah ii. 2; so is assurance to those that, through slavish fears and unbelief, 'have made their beds in hell,' as the psalmist speaks, Ps. cxxxix. 8. Gold that is far fetched, and dearly bought, is most esteemed; so that assurance that costs the soul most pains and patience, most waiting and weeping, most striving and wrestling, is most highly valued, and most wisely improved.[3] As, by the want of temporals, God teaches his people the better to prize them, and improve them when they enjoy them; so by the want of spirituals, God teaches his people the better to prize them, and improve them when they enjoy them. Ah! how sweet was Canaan to those that had been long in the wilderness! How precious was the gold and ear-rings to Israel, that had been long in Egypt, and the gifts and jewels to the Jews that had been long in Babylon! So is assurance to those precious souls that have been long without it, but at last come to enjoy it, Num. xiv. 33, 34; Exod. xi.; Ezra i.

After the Trojans had been wandering a long time in the Mediterranean Sea, as soon as they espied land, they cried out with exulting joy, 'Italy, Italy;' so when poor souls shall come to enjoy assurance, who have been long tossed up and down in a sea of sorrow and trouble, how will they with joy cry out, Assurance, assurance, assurance![4]

(6.) The sixth reason why God denies assurance to his dearest ones, at least for a time, is, *That they be kept humble and low in their own eyes; as the enjoyment of mercy glads us, so the want of mercy humbles us.*[5] David's heart was never more low, than when he had a crown only in hope, but not in hand. No sooner was the crown set upon his head,

[1] It was a notable saying of Nazianzen, Let me, says he, be cast into the sea, let me lose my peace, rather than the name of Christ should suffer; so tender was he of the honour and glory of Christ. [2] Life without light is but a lifeless life, Micah vii. 8, 9.

[3] Socrates prized the king's countenance above his coin, his good looks above his gold; so do saints prize assurance above all worldly enjoyments.

[4] The longer I stay for the empire, said the emperor's son, the greater it will be; so the longer a saint stays for assurance, the greater at last it will be. [Italy: Cf. Æneid, iii. 521, &c.—G.]

[5] Humility is *conservatrix virtutum*, saith one. [Bernard, *sub Humilitate.*—G.]

but his blood rises with his outward good, and in the pride of his heart he says, 'I shall never be removed,' Ps. xxx. 6.

Hezekiah was a holy man, yet he swells big under mercy.[1] No sooner doth God lift up his house higher than others, but he lifts up his heart in pride higher than others. When God had made him high in honours, riches, victories, ay, and in spiritual experiences, then his heart flies high, and he forgets God, and forgets himself, and forgets that all his mercies were from free mercy, that all his mercies were but borrowed mercies. Surely, it is better to want any mercy than an humble heart, it is better to have no mercy than want an humble heart.[2] A little, little mercy, with an humble heart, is far better than the greatest mercies with a proud heart. I had rather have Paul's coat with his humble heart, than Hezekiah's lifted-up heart with his treasures and royal robes. Well, Christians, remember this, God hath two strings to his bow; if your hearts will not lie humble and low under the sense of sin and misery, he will make them lie low under the want of some desired mercy. The want of assurance tends to bow and humble the soul, as the enjoyment of assurance doth to raise and rejoice the soul; and therefore do not wonder why precious souls are so long without assurance, why Christ's chariot, assurance, is so long a-coming, Judges v. 28.[3]

(7.) The seventh and last reason why God denies assurance, for a time, even to his dearest ones, is, *That they may live clearly and fully upon Jesus Christ, that Jesus Christ may be seen to be all in all.* It is natural to the soul to rest upon everything below Christ; to rest upon creatures, to rest upon graces, to rest upon duties, to rest upon divine manifestations, to rest upon celestial consolations, to rest upon gracious evidences, and to rest upon sweet assurances. Now the Lord, to cure his people of this weakness, and to bring them to live wholly and solely upon Jesus Christ, denies comfort, and denies assurance, &c., and for a time leaves his children of light to walk in darkness. Christians, this you are always to remember, that though the enjoyment of assurance makes most for your consolation, yet the living purely upon Christ in the want of assurance, makes most for his exaltation. No Christian to him that, in the want of visibles, can live upon an invisible God; that in thick darkness can live upon God as an everlasting light.[4] He is happy that believes upon seeing, upon feeling, but thrice happy are those souls that believe when they do not see; that love when they do not know that they are beloved; and that in the want of all comfort and assurance, can live upon Christ as their only all.[5] He that hath learned this holy art, cannot be miserable; he that is ignorant of this art cannot be happy.[6]

[1] 2 Chron. xxxii. The whole chapter is worthy of reading.

[2] As I get good by my sins, so I get hurt by my graces, said Mr Fox, they being accidental occasions of pride to him. [The Martyrologist.—G.] Augustine saith that the first, second, and third virtue of a Christian is humility. [See Index under Humility for former citations of this; also under Augustine for reference.—G.]

[3] God hath two hands, a hand open and a hand shut, and he makes use of both to keep souls humble.

[4] *Omne bonum in summo bono*, all good is in the chiefest good. Christ is all things to Christians; he is bread to feed them, a fountain to refresh them, a physician to heal them, a rock to shelter them, a light to guide them, and a crown to crown them.

[5] Heb. xi. 27; Isa. lx. 19; Micah vii. 7–9; John xx. 28, 29.

[6] Christ is *omnia super omnia*.

The second proposition is this, *That the Scripture hath many sweet significant words to express that well-grounded assurance by, which believers may attain to in this life.*

Sometimes it is called a persuasion.[1] Rom. viii. 38, 'I am *persuaded* that neither death, nor life, &c., shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' It is rendered a perspicuous and peculiar manifestation of Christ to the soul, John xiv. 21–24. It is often rendered, *to know*, as 1 John iii. 14, 19, 24, and v. 13, 19, &c. But the word that the Scripture doth most fully express this by, πληροφορία, full assurance, that is, when the soul, by the Spirit and word, is so fully persuaded of its eternal happiness and blessedness, that it is carried, like Noah's ark, above all waves, doubts, and fears, and, Noah-like, sits still and quiet, and can, with the apostle Paul, triumph over sin, hell, wrath, death, and devil.

This is sometimes called 'full assurance of understanding;' sometimes it is called 'full assurance of hope;' and sometimes it is called 'full assurance of faith;' because these are the choice and pleasant springs from whence assurance flows, Col. ii. 2; Heb. vi. 11, 18, 19; x. 22.

Now though this full assurance is earnestly desired, and highly prized, and the want of it much lamented, and the enjoyment of it much endeavoured after by all saints, yet it is only obtained by a few. Assurance is a mercy too good for most men's hearts, it is a crown too weighty for most men's heads. Assurance is *optimum maximum*, the best and greatest mercy; and therefore God will only give it to his best and dearest friends.[2]

Augustus in his solemn feasts, gave trifles to some, but gold to others. Honours and riches, &c., are trifles that God gives to the worst of men; but assurance is that 'tried gold,' Rev. iii. 18, that God only gives to tried friends. Among those few that have a share or portion in the special love and favour of God, there are but a very few that have an assurance of his love.[3]

It is one mercy for God to love the soul, and another mercy for God to assure the soul of his love. God writes many a man's name in the book of life, and yet will not let him know it till his hour of death, as the experience of many precious souls doth clearly evidence. Assurance is a flower of paradise that God sticks but in a few men's bosoms. It is one thing to be an heir of heaven, and another thing for a man to know or see himself an heir of heaven. The child in the arms may be heir to a crown, a kingdom, and yet not understand it; so many a saint may be heir to a crown, a kingdom of glory, and yet not know it. As the babes that passes the pangs of the first-birth do not presently cry, 'Father, father;' so the new-born babes in Christ, that have passed the pangs of the second-birth, do not presently cry 'Abba, Father;' they

[1] (1.) There is a natural persuasion: natural principles may persuade a man that there is a God, and that this God is a great God, a beauteous God, &c., but this will not make a man happy; (2.) there is a moral persuasion; (3.) there is a traditional persuasion; (4.) there is a divine persuasion that flows from divine principles and causes.

[2] This full assurance is the *maximum quod sic*, the highest pinnacle of assurance.

[3] Most saints, I believe, can give a loud testimony to this truth. I shall rejoice when their experiences shall confute it. [Augustus, . . . *trifles*: Suetonius, *Octavius*, cap. 75.—G.]

do not presently cry out, Heaven, heaven is ours; glory, glory is ours Rom. viii. 16, 17, 1 Peter ii. 2.

The third proposition is this, *That a man may have true grace, that hath no assurance of the love and favour of God, or of the remission of his sins and salvation of his soul.*

A man may be truly holy, and yet not have assurance that he shall be eternally happy. A man may be God's, and yet he not know it; his estate may be good, and yet he not see it; he may be in a safe condition, when he is not in a comfortable condition. All may be well with him in the court of glory, when he would give a thousand worlds that all were but well in the court of conscience.[1]

The Canaanite woman shewed much love, wisdom, zeal, humility, and faith, yea, such strength of faith as makes Christ admire her, and yield to her, grace her, and gratify her, and yet she had no assurance that we read of, Mat. xv. 22, 29. So Paul, speaking of the believing Ephesians, saith, 'In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,' Eph. i. 13.[2] First, they heard the word; and then secondly, they believed; and then thirdly, they were sealed; that is, fully assured of a heavenly inheritance, of a purchased possession.[3] So 1 John v. 13, 'These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the Son of God.' So Isa. l. 10, 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God.' So Micah vii. 8, 9, 'Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me; he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.'[4] Asaph was a very holy man, a man eminent in grace, and yet without assurance, as may be seen at large, Ps. lxxvii. Heman, doubtless, was a very precious soul, and yet from his youth up, he was even distracted with terrors, Ps. lxxxviii. There are thousands of Christians that are in a state of grace, and shall be saved, that want assurance and the proper effects of it, as high joy, pure comfort, glorious peace, and vehement longings after the coming of Christ.[5]

Assurance is requisite to the well-being of a Christian, but not to the being; it is requisite to the consolation of a Christian, but not to the salvation of a Christian; it is requisite to the well-being of grace, but not to the mere being of grace. Though a man cannot be saved without faith, yet he may be saved without assurance. God hath in many places of the Scripture declared, that without faith there is no salvation, but God hath not in any one place of the Scripture declared, that without

[1] The blind man in the Gospel called his faith unbelief. [Mark ix. 24.—G.]

[2] They that honour God by sealing to his truth, those God will honour by sealing them with his Spirit.

[3] Saints have eternal life, 1, *in pretio*; 2, *in promisso*; 3, *in primitiis.*

[4] זעף. *Zagnaph* signifies vehement anger, with a sad and lowering countenance, Dan. i. 10. *Vide* Merc. [That is, John Le Mercier or Mercerus. Died 1572. His 'Commentaries' still in use.—G.]

[5] Isa. viii. 17; xlix. 14–16; liv. 6–11.

assurance there is no salvation.[1] A man must first be saved before he can be assured of his salvation, for he cannot be assured of that which is not; and a man must have saving grace before he can be saved, for he cannot be saved by that which he hath not. Again, a man must be ingrafted into Christ, before he can be assured of remission or salvation, but this he cannot be before he hath faith, therefore there may be grace where there is no assurance. Christ went to heaven in a cloud, and the angel went up to heaven in the smoke and flame of the sacrifice; and so I doubt not but many precious souls do ascend to heaven in clouds and darkness, Acts i. 9; Judges xiii. 20.

Now a man may have grace, and yet want assurance, and that may arise from these causes.

(1.) First, *From his cavilling spirit*, and from his siding with the old man against the new, with the flesh against the spirit, with corruption against grace, with the house of Saul against the house of David, with the work of Satan against the work of God. Sin is Satan's work; grace, holiness is God's; yet such is the weakness, yea, madness of many poor souls, that they will fall in and side with Satan's work, rather than with God's, against their own souls.[2] Ah! Christians, will you condemn that judge for injustice and unrighteousness, that shall open his ears to the complaints of the plaintiff, but stops his ears against the answers of the defendant; and will you not condemn yourselves for that you do with both ears hear what sin and Satan hath to say against the soul, but have not one ear open to hear what the Spirit, what grace, what the new man, what the noble part of man, what the regenerate man, can say for the justification, satisfaction, and consolation of the soul.[3] Let me tell thee, O thou cavilling soul! that it is thy wisdom and thy duty to remember that command of God, that doth prohibit thee from bearing false witness against thy neighbour. That same command doth enjoin thee not to bear false witness against the work of grace upon thy own heart, against the precious and glorious things that God hath done for thy soul. And thou shouldst make as much conscience of bearing false witness against anything the Lord hath wrought in thee, and for thee, as thou doest make conscience of bearing false witness against thy neighbour. It cannot but be sad with the soul, but be night with the soul, when it makes much conscience of the one, and no conscience of the other. Many heathens have been so loving and faithful one to another, that they would rather die, than they would bear false witness one against another. How dare you

[1] God never said, Except you be assured I will pardon you, I will never pardon you; except you are assured I will save you, I will never save you. This is language God never spoke; and why, then, should men speak it?

[2] Cease cavilling, thou weak soul, and say, *Quod fui, Domine, ignosce; quod sum, corrige; quod ero, dirige*, O Lord, forgive what I have been, correct what I am, direct what I shall be.

[3] When John Prostiborski [?], baron of Schanow, was laid on the rack, he, with an heroical indignation, cut out his tongue, and cast it away. Being demanded why he did so, set down his answer with a quill on the wall: I did it, said he, because I would not be brought by any tortures to say anything that is false against myself or others. Ah! cavilling souls, I had almost said that you were better cut out your tongues than suffer them to be cavilling against the grace of God, the image of God, that is stamped upon you.

cavilling souls, then to bear false witness against your own souls, and the gracious work of the Lord upon them! If this be not the way to keep off assurance, and keep the soul in darkness, yea, in a hell, I know nothing.

(2.) Again, a man may have grace, and yet want assurance, and that may arise in the second place from *the exceeding littleness and weakness of his grace.*[1] A little candle yields but a little light, and a little grace yields but a little evidence.[2] Great measures of grace carries with them great and clear evidences, but little measures carries with them but little evidence. Some stars are so small that they are scarce discernible; so some saints' graces are so small, that they can hardly see their graces to be graces. A little fire will yield but a little heat; a little grace will yield but a little comfort, a little evidence; a little grace will yield a man a heaven hereafter, but it is a great deal of grace that must yield us a heaven here; a little stock will bring in but a little profit; a little grace will bring in but a little peace; a little jewel yields but a little lustre, a little glory; no more doth a little grace, and therefore it is that Christians that have but a little grace, have but a little of the shine and lustre of assurance, they have but little joy and comfort in this world. Yet that the spirits of weak Christians may not utterly faint, let me give them this hint, viz., that the weakest Christian is as much justified, as much pardoned, as much adopted, and as much united to Christ as the strongest, and hath as much interest and propriety in Christ as the highest and noblest Christian that breathes, though he cannot make so much advantage and improvement of his interest and propriety as the strong Christian, who hath a greater degree of grace.[3]

Hierom [Jerome] observes upon the beatitudes, that there are many of the promises made to weak grace: Mat. v. 3, 4, 6, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit: blessed are they that mourn: blessed are they that hunger and thirst.' Weak saints, remember this: the promise is a ring of gold, and Christ is the precious tried stone in that ring; and upon that stone must you rest, as you would have grace to thrive, and your souls to be safe and happy. Weak souls, remember this: as Joseph sent chariots to bring his father and his brethren to him, Gen. xlv. so God would have your weak graces to be as chariots to bring you to himself, who is the cherisher, strengthener, and increaser of grace. He that makes his graces to be servants and handmaids to convey him to Christ, the fountain of grace, he shall find the greatest sweetness in grace, and the greatest increase of grace.

(3.) Thirdly, A man may have true grace, and yet want assurance, and this may arise from *the resurrection of old sins.* Ah! when those sins which were long since committed, and long since lamented, and long since loathed, and long since crucified; when those old sins, which

[1] Mat. xiv. 30, 31; Mark ix. 24.

[2] Pythagoras saith, that mustard seed hath the pre-eminence among those things whose power is to ascend upward. Pliny, in his *Nat. Hist.*, lib. ii. cap. 22, speaks more of this grain. [Rather lib. xix. c. 54, 57.—G.]

[3] The babe in the arms hath as much propriety in the father as he that is grown up to ripe years, though he cannot make such improvement of it as the other. A child's hand may receive a pearl as well as the hand of a giant; so may a weak faith a Christ as well as a strong.

hath cost a soul many prayers and many tears, and many sighs, and many groans, and many complaints, when those sins that have been long buried shall be again revived, and meet the soul, and stare upon the soul, and say to the soul, We are thine, and we will follow thee; we are thine, and we will haunt thee;[1] ah, how will this cause a man's countenance to be changed, his thoughts to be troubled, his joints to be loosed, and his heart to be amazed. David and Job meeting with the sins of their youth, long after they were lamented and pardoned, makes their hearts startle and tremble, Ps. xxv. 7, Job xiii. 26. Upon the new risings of old sins, the soul begins to question all, and thus to expostulate the case: Surely my estate is not good, my pardon is not sealed; if it be, how comes these sins to be revived, to be remembered? Hath not God engaged himself in the promises of grace, that those sins that are pardoned, shall never be remembered? Isa. xliii. 25, Jer. xxxi. 34, and surely if these sins be not pardoned, I have reason to fear that others be not pardoned; and if my sins be not pardoned, how shall I escape being destroyed? Surely my repentance was not sound, my sorrow was not sincere, the blow, the wound I gave sin, was not mortal; if it had, how comes it to pass that it now meets me like an armed enemy? Thus, these new risings of old sins keeps many a man's soul and assurance asunder.

(4.) Fourthly, A man may have grace and yet want assurance, and this may arise from *his falling short of that perfection that the word requires, and that other saints have attained to.*[2] Ah! says such a soul, surely I have no grace! Oh how short do I fall of such and such righteous rules, and of such and such precious Christians! Ah! how clear are they in their light! How strong are they in their love! How high are they in their attainments! How are their hearts filled with grace, and their lives with holiness! All their motions towards God, and towards man, speak out grace, grace; they pray indeed like saints, and live indeed like angels. Now many poor souls, comparing themselves with the perfect rule of righteousness, and with those that are in the highest forms in Christ's school, and that are the noblest and choicest patterns for purity and sanctity, and finding such a vast disproportion between their hearts and the rule, between their actions and lives, and the actions and lives of others, they are apt to sit down sadded and discouraged.[3]

Suetonius reports of Julius Cæsar, that seeing Alexander's statue, he fetched a deep sigh, because he at that age had done so little.[4] So many precious souls sit down sighing and weeping, that they have lived so long, and done so little for God, and for their own internal and eternal good. This wounds and sinks their spirits, that they are so

[1] It would very much discomfort us and terrify us to see one haunt us that was long since laid in the grave, whose resurrection we did neither fear nor repent,* till the sounding of the last trumpet.—* Qu. 'expect'?—ED.

[2] Perfection is desirable on earth, but shall be only enjoyed in heaven.

[3] It was a sweet saying of one, *In libro tuo scribuntur omnes qui quod possunt faciunt, si quod debent non possunt*, They are surely written all in God's book that do what they can, though they cannot but underdo. Remember this, though your consolation depends upon degrees of grace, yet your salvation depends upon the truth of grace. [Cf. Purnell, 'The Way step by step to a Sound and Saving Conversion,' p. 99—which Brooks here anticipates.—G.]

[4] A commonplace in the Lives of Cæsar, early and modern.—G.

unlike to those in grace, that they desire to be like unto in glory; and that they are so far below such and such in spirituals, whom they are so far above in temporals.[1]

(5.) Fifthly, A man may have true grace and yet want assurance, and this may arise from *that smoke and clouds, those fears and doubts that corruption raises in the soul; so that the soul cannot see those excellent graces that otherwise might be discerned.* Though there may be many precious gems and jewels in the house, yet the smoke may hinder a man from seeing them sparkle and shine. So though there may be many precious graces in the souls of saints, yet corruption may raise such a dust, such a smoke in the soul, that the soul is not able to see them in the beauty and glory. The well of water was near Hagar, but she saw it not till her eyes were opened by the Lord, Gen. xxi. 19, 20. So grace is near the soul, yea, in the soul sometimes, and yet the soul doth not see it, till God opens the eye and shews it. 'The Lord was in this place,' saith Jacob, 'and I knew it not,' Gen. xxviii. 16. So many a precious soul may say, grace was in my heart, and I knew it not, I saw it not.[2]

Blessed Bradford in one of his epistles saith thus, 'O Lord, methinks I feel it so with me, sometimes as if there were no difference between my heart, and the heart of the wicked; my mind is as blind as theirs, my spirit as stout, stubborn, and rebellious as theirs, and my thoughts as confused as theirs, and my affections as disordered as theirs, and my services as formal as theirs,' &c.[3] Ah, Christians! have not many of your souls found it so? Surely yes! No wonder then, that though you have grace, yet you have not seen it sparkling and shining in your souls; as some have thought that their fields have had no corn, because they have been so full of weeds; and that their heap hath no wheat, because nothing hath appeared but chaff; and that their pile hath no gold, because it hath been covered with much dross. So some have thought that their hearts have been void of grace, because they have been so full of fears and doubts. Peter at one time believes and walks, at another time he doubts and sinks, Mat. xiv. 30. Abraham believes and offers up Isaac at one time, he fears and falls at another time. 'Say thou art my sister, lest they kill me,' Gen xx. 2. So David and Job, they had their shufflings, tremblings, faintings, shakings, and questionings, Ps. cxvi. 11, Ps. xxxi. 22. It is not always high water with saints, sometimes they are reduced to a very low ebb. The best of saints are like the ark, tossed up and down with waves, with fears and doubts; and so it will be till they are quite in the bosom of Christ.[4]

(6.) *Lastly,* A man may have grace, and yet not see it, yet not know it; and this may arise from *his non-searching, his non-examining, his non-ransacking, of his own soul.* There is gold in the mine, and

[1] The being of grace is a different thing from the seeing of grace. The blind man in the Gospel called his faith unbelief.

[2] Yet a saint at worst is not like him in Plutarch, who would not be resolved of his doubts because he would not lose the pleasure in seeking for resolution. No; he loves, and looks, and longs for resolution to all his doubts.

[3] Writings of Bradford, by Townsend, 1853: Letters.—G.

[4] *Rara hora, brevis mora.*—Bernard.

men might find it, if they would but dig and search diligently after it.[1] There is grace in the heart, and you might see it, if you would but take the candle of the Lord, and look narrowly after it. Look, as many a man upon a diligent search may find his temporal estate to be better than he apprehends it, so many choice souls upon a diligent search may find their spiritual estate to be far better than they conceived or judged it to be. Therefore souls, cease from complaining, cease from rash judging and dooming of yourselves to hell, and be diligent in inquiring what the Lord hath done, and what the Lord is a-doing, in you and for you. Compare the books together, compare his working upon you and others together. What! is there no light, no love, no longings, no hungerings, no thirstings after God? What! is there no sighing, no complaining, no mourning, under the sense of sin, and under the want of divine favour?[2] Surely if you search, you will find some of these things; and if you do, prize them as jewels that are more worth than a world. God will not despise 'the day of small things,' and will you? Will you, dare you, say that that is little that is more worth than heaven? The least spark of grace shall at last be turned into a crown of glory. Well! remember this, that as the least grace, if true and sincere, is sufficient to salvation, so the sense of the least grace should be sufficient to your consolation.

The fourth proposition is this, viz., *That God may deny assurance long, and yet give it in to his children at last, after patient waiting.* God appears to David, and brings him out of 'an horrible pit' (or out of a 'pit of noise'), 'and sets his feet upon a rock, and puts a new song into his mouth,' Ps. xl. 1–4.

After the church in the Canticles had run through many hazards and hardships, many difficulties and dangers, she finds 'him whom her soul loved,' chap. iii. 5.

The prophet sits down and bewails his sad condition thus: Ps. lxix. 3, 20, 'I am weary of my crying; my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait on my God. And I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.' Ay, but at last God appears, and then says he: 'I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving,' ver. 30.

Job sighs it out: 'Behold I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him,' Job viii. 9. But after this sighing, he sings it out: 'Till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live,' chap. xxvii. 5, 6.[3]

[1] Worthless daisies grow in sight upon the surface of the earth, but the precious and richest rarities are hid within the bowels of the earth. You are wise, and know how to apply it.

[2] The cry that was heard in the temple was, *Migremus hinc*, Let us go hence, let us go hence. [Josephus, Jewish War, Book vi.—G.]

[3] Experience doth abundantly evidence, that this is the manner of God's dealing with abundance of those precious souls of whom this world is not worthy. I could say much to this point from my own knowledge, but I must forbear lighting a candle to see the sun at noon.

Mr Frogmorton was as holy and as choice a preacher as most was in England in those days, and he lived seven and thirty years without assurance, and then died, having assurance but an hour before he died. He went to die at Mr Dod's, who is now with the Lord, and did die there in full assurance of the justification of his person, the remission of his sins, and the salvation of his soul.[1] God denied assurance a great while to Mr Glover, though he sought it with many prayers and tears; and yet when he was in sight of the fire, the Lord shined forth in his favour so sweetly upon him, that he cries out to his friend, 'He is come, he is come!'[2] So Mrs Katherine Bretterge, after many bitter conflicts with Satan the day before she died, she had sweet assurance of that kingdom that shakes not, of those riches that corrupt not, and of that crown of righteousness that fades not away.[3]

I have read of three martyrs that were bound and brought to the stake, and one of them gets from under his stake to admiration, and falls down upon the ground, and wrestles earnestly with God for the sense of his love, and God gave it him then at that instant, and so he came and embraced the stake, and died cheerfully and resolutely a glorious martyr. God delayed till he was bound, and then lets out himself sweetly and gloriously to him.[4]

Now God doth delay the giving in of assurance to his dearest ones, and that partly to let them know that he will be waited on, and that assurance is a jewel worth waiting for.

The least smile from God when our last glass is running, will make our souls amends for all their waiting. And partly that we may know that he is free in his workings, and that he is not tied to any preparations or qualifications in the creature, but is free to come when he will, and go when he will, and stay as long as he will, though the soul doth sigh it out, 'How long, Lord, how long will it be before my mourning be turned into rejoicing?'

Again, God delays the giving in of assurance, not because he delights to keep his children in fears and doubts, nor because he thinks that assurance is too rare, too great, too choice a jewel to bestow upon them; but it is either because he thinks their souls do not stand at a sufficient distance from sin, or because their souls are so taken up and filled with creature enjoyments as that Christ is put to lodge in an out-house, or else it is because they pursue not after assurance with all their might; they give not all diligence to make their calling and election sure; or else it is because their hearts are not prepared, are not low enough, for so high a favour.[5]

Now God's delaying assurance upon these weighty grounds should rather work us to admire him, to justify him, and quietly to wait for him, than to have any hard thoughts of him, or to carry it unkindly to him, or impatiently to say, 'Why is his chariot so long a-coming?' Judges v. 28.

The fifth proposition is this, *That those choice souls that have assurance may lose it, they may forfeit it.* The freshness and greenness, the beauty, lustre, and glory of assurance may be lost.

[1] See Index, *sub* Frogmorton.—G. [2] See Vol. I. p. 109.—G.

[3] Ibid. p. 116.—G.

[4] Hudson, Ibid. p. 109.—G. *Voluntas Dei necessitas rei*, God will have every child of his to put his *fiat*, his *placet*, to God's, go it never so much against the hairs.

[5] Isa. lix. 1, 2; Jeremiah v. 25; Luke ii. 7; 2 Peter ii. 5.

It is true, believers cannot lose the habits, the seeds, the root of grace; yet they may lose assurance, which is the beauty and fragrancy, the crown and glory of grace, 1 John iii. 9, 1 Peter i. 5. These two lovers, grace and assurance, are not by God so nearly joined together but that they may by sin on our side, and justice on God's, be put asunder. The keeping of these two lovers, grace and assurance, together, will yield the soul two heavens, a heaven of joy and peace here, and a heaven of happiness and blessedness hereafter; but the putting these two lovers asunder will put the soul into a hell here, though it escape a hell hereafter. This Chrysostom knew well, when he professed that the want of the enjoyment of God would be a far greater hell to him than the feeling of any punishment.[1]

As you would keep your Christ, as you would keep your comfort, as you would keep your crown, keep grace and assurance together, and neither by lip nor life, by word nor works, let these be put asunder. It is possible for the best of men so to blot and blur their evidences for felicity and glory, as that they may not be able to read them nor understand them. They may so vex and grieve the Spirit either by gross enormities, or by refusing his comforts and cordials, or by neglecting or slighting his gracious actings in themselves and others, or by misjudging his work, as calling faith fancy, or sincerity hypocrisy, &c., or by fathering those brats upon him that are the children of their own distempered hearts, as that he may refuse to witness their interest in him, though he be a witnessing Spirit, and refuse to comfort them, though he be the only Comforter.[2]

The best believer that breathes may have his summer-day turned into a winter-night, his rejoicing into sighing, his singing into weeping, his wedding-robes into mourning weeds, his wine into water, his sweet into bitter, his manna, his angels' food, into husks, his pleasant grapes into the grapes of Sodom, his fruitful Canaan, his delightful paradise, into a barren and unlovely wilderness. Look, as faith is often attended with unbelief, and sincerity with hypocrisy, and humility with vainglory, so is assurance with fears and doubts.[3]

Blessed Hooker[4] lived near thirty years in close communion with God, without any considerable withdrawings of God all that while; and yet, upon his dying bed, he went away without any sense of assurance, or discoveries of the smiles of God, to the wonder and deceiving of the expectation of many precious souls, and without doubt in judgment to wicked men.

Look, as many a man loses the sight of the city when he comes near to it, so many a choice soul loses the sight of heaven, even then when he is nearest to heaven. Abraham, you know, had assurance in an extraordinary way concerning his protection from God; and yet says

[1] It is wonderful rare, if possible, for a soul that ever had a well-grounded assurance not to experience this truth at first or last. A separation between the body and the soul will not so torment the soul as separation between grace and assurance.

[2] *Spiritus sanctus est res delicata*, the Holy Spirit is a very tender thing, 1 Sam. xvi., and John xiv.

[3] What Latimer said of the Spirit, It is going and coming, may be truly said of assurance and joy, It is coming and going. So did Master Burroughs, of blessed memory, go into heaven in a cloud. [That is, Jeremiah Burroughs. He died in 1646.—G.]

[4] Thomas Hooker, afterwards of New England. He died 1647.—G.

Abraham, 'Say thou art my sister; for otherwise they will kill me,' Gen. xii. 13, and xx. 2. Ah! how was the freshness, the greenness, the beauty and glory of his assurance wore off, that he should, out of slavish fears, expose his wife to other men's pleasure, and himself and his neighbour to God's displeasure; that he should wound four at once, the honour of God, his wife's chastity, his own conscience, and Pharaoh's soul.[1]

David, you know, sometimes sings it out sweetly: 'The Lord is my portion, and the lot of mine inheritance; he is my salvation: of whom shall I be afraid? He is my rock and fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my strength, my trust, my buckler, and my high tower,' Ps. xviii. 2. At other times you have him sighing it out: 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? why art thou disquieted in me? why hast thou forgotten me?' Ps. xlii. 5. 'O God, my rock! why go I mourning'? 'Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over my head; as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long,' Ps. xxxviii. 2–6. 'Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled,' Ps. xxx. 7. 'Restore to me the joy of my salvation, that the bones that thou hast broken may rejoice,' Ps. li. 12. His heart was more often out of tune than his harp. He begins many of his psalms sighing, and ends them singing; and others he begins in joy, and ends in sorrow; 'So that one would think,' saith one, 'that those psalms had been composed by two men of a contrary humour.'[2] Yea, it is very observable, that though David had assurance in an extraordinary way that he should be king, being anointed by that great prophet Samuel, yet the lustre and glory of this assurance wears off; and he, overcome by slavish fears, cries out, that 'All men are liars,' (even Samuel as well as others), and that 'he shall one day perish by the hand of Saul.'[3] It is true, says David, I have a crown, a kingdom in a promise; but I must swim to the crown through blood, I must win the crown before I wear it; and the truth is, I am like to die before I attain it. Yea, and after he was king, when king Jesus did but hide his face, he was sorely troubled;[4] so that neither his glorious throne, nor his royal robes, nor his golden crown, nor his glistering courtiers, nor his large revenues, nor his cheerful temper, nor his former experiences, could quiet him or satisfy him when God had turned his back upon him. Look, as all lights cannot make up the want of the light of the sun, so all temporal comforts cannot make up the want of one spiritual comfort.

So Job sometimes sings it out, 'My witness is in heaven, and my record is on high; and my Redeemer lives,' &c., Job xvi. 19, and xix. 25. At other times you have him complaining, 'The arrows of the

[1] We should rather die than lie. We are not to tell an officious [*i. e.* forward to lie] lie, to tell a lie for no hurt, but for no good, though it were to save all the world, said Austin.

[2] Peter du Moulin. [Better known as Molinæus.—G.]

[3] Ps. cxvi. 11, חפזי, In my trembling, or in my affrightment, I said, all men are liars.

[4] Ps. xxx. 6, 7, בהל, Bahal. I was troubled like a withered flower that loseth sap and vigour; so it is used in Exod. xv. 15. When God is gone, it is night with the soul.

Almighty stick fast in me, and their poison drinketh up my spirit,' Job vi. 4; 'The terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.' And chap. xxix. 2–5, you have him sighing it out thus: 'Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle; when the Almighty was yet with me!' &c.[1]

Now, by all these clear instances, and by many other saints' experiences, it is evident that the choicest saints may lose their assurance, and the lustre and glory of it may decay and wither. What the soul should do in such a case, and how it should be recovered out of this sad state, I shall shew you towards the close of this discourse.

The sixth proposition is this, *That the certainty and infallibility of a Christian's assurance cannot be made known to any but his own heart.* He can say as the blind man once said, 'This I know, that once I was blind, but now I see,' John ix. 25. Once I was a slave, but now I am a son; once I was dead, but now I am alive; once I was darkness, but now I am light in the Lord; once I was a child of wrath, an heir of hell, but now I am an heir of heaven; once I was Satan's bondman, but now I am God's freeman; once I was under the spirit of bondage, but now I am under the spirit of adoption, that seals up to me the remission of my sins, the justification of my person, and the salvation of my soul.[2] All this I know, says the assured saint; but I cannot make you know it certainly and infallibly if you would give me a thousand worlds.[3] What I have found and felt, and what I do find and feel, is wonderfully beyond what I am able to express. I am as well able to tell the stars of heaven, and to number the sand of the sea, as I am able to declare to you the joy, the joy, the unconceivable joy, the assurance, the glorious assurance, that God hath given me.

Severinus, the Indian saint, under the power of assurance, was heard to say, O my God! do not for pity so over-joy me; if I must still live, and have such consolations, take me to heaven, &c. So say souls under the power of assurance: Lord! we are so filled with joy and comfort, with delight and content, that we are not able to express it here on earth; and therefore take us to heaven, that we may have that glory put upon us, that may enable us to declare and manifest those glorious things that thou hast wrought in us.[4]

Parents do by experience feel such soundings, such meltings, such rollings, such sweet workings of their affections and bowels towards their children, that for their lives they cannot to the life describe to others what it is to be a father, to be a mother; what it is to have such rollings of bowels towards children. Assurance is that white stone that none knoweth but he that hath it: Rev. ii. 17, 'To him that

[1] *Tota vita boni Christiani sanctum desiderium est*, the whole life of a good Christian is an holy wish, said one.

[2] Rom. viii. 6, 11, 13; Eph. v. 8, and ii. 3; John viii. 36; 2 Cor. iii. 17; Gal. i. 1, 13; Eph. i. 13, 14.

[3] Can you compass the heavens with a span, or contain the sea in a nutshell? Then may you fully evidence your assurance to others.

[4] 1 Peter i. 8. So my young Lord Harrington [Funeral Sermon by Stock, 1614.—G.], and Nazianzen, and Vincentius, and Faninus an Italian martyr, with many more that might be named. [Vincentius, Clarke, as before, pp. 34, 36; Faninus, *ibid.*—G.]

overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.'[1] White stones were in great use among the Romans.

(1.) In white stones they used to write the names of such as were victorious and conquerors; so in that text, 'To him that overcometh, will I give a white stone.'

(2.) They used to acquit the innocent in courts of justice, by giving them a white stone; and so here the white stone points out absolution and remission.[2]

(3.) They used to give a white stone to those that were chosen to any places of honour; so the white stone of assurance is an evidence of our election, of our being chosen to a kingdom that shakes not, to riches that corrupt not, and to a crown of glory that fades not. And thus much for this sixth proposition, viz., that the certainty and infallibility of a Christian's assurance cannot be made known to any but his own heart, Heb. xii. 28; Mat. vi. 20; 1 Pet. i. 4.

The seventh proposition is this, *That there are some special seasons and times, wherein the Lord is graciously pleased to give to his children a sweet assurance of his favour and love, and they are these that follow.*

I. First, *Sometimes, I say not always, at first conversion, the Lord is pleased to make out sweet manifestations of his love to the penitent soul.* When the soul hath been long under guilt and wrath, when the soul hath been long under the frowns and displeasure of God, and hath long seen the gates of heaven barred against him, and the mouth of hell open to receive him; when the soul hath said, Surely there is no hope, there is no help, surely I shall lose God, Christ and heaven for ever, then God comes in and speaks peace to the soul, then he says, 'I will blot out thy iniquities for my name's sake, and will remember thy sins no more,' Isa. xliii. 25. Hark, soul, hark, says Christ, 'My thoughts are not as your thoughts, nor my ways as your ways,' Isa. lv. 8, 9. My thoughts towards you are thoughts of peace and thoughts of love. Hark, soul! here is mercy to pardon thee, and here is grace to adorn thee; here is righteousness to justify thee; here is eye-salve to enlighten thee, and gold to enrich thee, and raiment to clothe thee, and balm to heal thee, and bread to nourish thee, and wine upon the lees to cheer thee, and happiness to crown thee, and myself to satisfy thee. Ah, souls! have not some of you found it so? surely you have.[3]

God deals sometimes with rebellious sinners, as princes do with those that are in arms, that are in open rebellion against them. You know princes will put such hard to it: they shall fare hard, and lie hard; chains, and racks, and what not, shall attend them; and yet after the sentence is passed upon them, and they are upon the last step of the ladder of life, ready to be turned off, and all hope of escape is gone, then the prince's pardon is put into their hand.[4] So the Lord brings many poor souls to the last steps of the ladder, to a hopeless condition, and then he puts their pardon into their bosoms; then he says, 'Be of good cheer, I have

[1] *Vide* Beza, Bullinger, Pererius, and Brightman, on the words.

[2] And they gave black stones to note their condemnation.

[3] 1 Cor. i. 30; Rev. iii. 18; Isa. xxv. 6.

[4] This hath been a practice among all princes, whether they have been Christians or heathens.

received you into favour, I have set my love upon you, I am reconciled to you, and will never be separated from you.'

You know how God dealt with Paul: after he had awakened and convinced him, after he had unhorsed him and overthrown him, after he had amazed and astonished him, then he shews himself graciously and favourably to him, then he takes him up into the third heaven, and makes such manifestations of his love and favour, of his beauty and glory, of his mercy and majesty, as he is not able to utter.[1]

So upon the prodigal's return, the fatted calf is killed, and the best robe is put upon his back, and the ring is put on his hand, and shoes on his feet, Luke xv. 22, 23.

Some understand by the robe, the royalty of Adam, others, the righteousness of Christ; and by the ring, some understand the pledges of God's love, rings being given as pledges of love; some the seal of God's Spirit, men using to seal with their rings.[2]

Among the Romans, the ring was an ensign of virtue, honour, and nobility, whereby they that wore them were distinguished from the common people. I think the main thing intended by all these passages, is to shew us, that God sometimes upon the sinner's first conversion and returning to him, is graciously pleased to give him some choice and signal manifestations of his love and favour, of his good-will and pleasure, and that upon these following grounds:

(1.) *The first ground, That they may not be swallowed up of sorrow, nor give up the ghost under the pangs and throes of the new birth.* Ah! did not the Lord let in some beams of love upon the soul, when it is *Magor-missabib*, a terror to itself; when the heart is a hell of horror, the conscience an *Aceldama*, a field of black blood; when the soul is neither quiet at home nor abroad, neither at bed nor board, neither in company nor out of company, neither in the use of ordinances nor in the neglect of ordinances; how would the soul faint, sink, and despair for ever![3] But now when it is thus night with the soul, the Lord sweetly comes in and tells the soul, that all is well, that he hath found a ransom for the soul, that the books are crossed, that all debts are discharged, and that his favour and love upon the soul is fixed, Job xxxiii. 24. And so God by his sweet and still voice, speaking thus to the soul, quiets and satisfies it, and keeps it from sinking and despairing.

(2.) *The second ground.* God gives in assurance sometimes at first conversion, *that he may the more raise and inflame their love and affections to him.* Ah! how does a pardon given in when a man is ready to be turned off, draw out his love, and raise his affections to that prince that shews bowels of mercy, when he is upon the brink of misery![4] So when a poor sinner is upon the last step of the ladder, upon the very brink of hell and misery, now for God to come in and speak peace and pardon to the soul, ah! how does it inflame the soul, and works the soul to a holy admiration of God, and to a spiritual delighting in God!

[1] Acts ix. 3, Vide *Bezam, et Grotium, et Calvin.*

[2] The dignity which Adam lost; nay, I think in this parable God sets forth his goodness and our happiness in restoring to us more by the death of the second Adam, than we lost by the sin of the first Adam.

[3] An awakened conscience is like Prometheus's vulture, it lies ever gnawing.

[4] Titus's motto was, *Princeps bonus orbis amor*, all the world falls in love with a good prince, with a merciful prince. [Cf. Josephus, *sub nomine.*—G.]

King Antigonus his pulling a sheep with his own hands out of a dirty ditch, as he was passing by, drew his subjects exceedingly to commend him and love him.[1] So King Jesus pulling of poor souls out of their sins, and as it were out of hell, cannot but draw them to be much in the commendations of Christ, and strong in their love to Christ. Christ hath nothing more in his eye, nor upon his heart, than to act towards his people in such ways and at such seasons as may most win upon their affections. And therefore it is, that sometimes he gives the strongest consolation at first conversion.

(3.) *The third ground.* Christ sometimes at first conversion grants to his people the sweetest manifestations of his love, *that they may be the more active, fervent, abundant, and constant in ways of grace and holiness.*[2] He knows that divine manifestations of love will most awaken, quicken, and engage the soul to ways of piety and sanctity.

Look what wings are to the bird, oil to the wheels, weights to the clock, a reward to the coward, and the loadstone to the needle, that are the smiles and discoveries of God to a poor soul at his conversion. The manifestatations of divine love puts heat and life into the soul, it makes the soul very serious and studious how to act for God, and live to God, and walk with God. Ah! says a soul under the beams of divine love, it is my meat and drink, it is my joy and crown to do all I can for that God that hath done so much for me, as to know me in darkness, and to speak love to me when I was most unlovely; to turn my mourning into rejoicing, and my hell into a heaven.

(4.) *The fourth ground.* Christ sometimes at first conversion gives his people the sweetest manifestations of his love, *to fence and fortify them against Satan's fiery temptations.* Before Christ shall be led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, the Spirit of the Lord shall descend upon him like a dove, and he shall hear a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' Mat. iii. 16, 17,[3] that so he may be strong in resisting, and glorious in triumphing over all the assaults and temptations of Satan, Eph. vi. 16. So many times at first conversion, the Lord makes out sweet manifestations of his love to the soul, that so the soul may stand fast, and not give ground, and in the sense of divine love may so manage the shield of faith, as to quench all the fiery darts of the devil.

The Lord knows that when he sets upon the delivering of a poor soul from the kingdom of darkness, and translating it into the kingdom of his dear Son, that Satan will roar and rage, rend and tear, as he did him, Mark ix. 25, 26, 'When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee to come out of him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.' No sooner did Jesus Christ look with an eye of love, pity, and compassion upon the boy, but the devil in his rage and wrath falls a-renting and tearing of him, as mad dogs

[1] Diod. lib. xviii.–xx.; Plutarch, *Eumenes* and *Demetrius*.—G.

[2] *Amor dei nunquam otiosus est; operatur enim magna si est; si vero operari renuit, amor non est;* the love of God is never idle, for if it is, it worketh great things; but if it refuse to work, it is not love. So said Bradford, and other blessed souls.

[3] ἐυδόκησα is an emphatical word, and signifies that infinite affection, delight, and content that God the Father did take in Christ.

do things they fasten upon. This poor child had never so sore a fit as now he was nearest the cure. When rich mercy and glorious power is nearest the soul, then Satan most storms and rages against the soul, Col. i. 13.[1] The more the bowels of Christ do work towards a sinner, the more furious will Satan assault that sinner. Therefore divine wisdom and goodness does the more eminently shine in giving the poor soul some sight of Canaan, and some bunches and clusters of that land, upon its first coming out of the wilderness of sin and sorrow.

But that no soul may mistake this last proposition, give me leave to premise these two cautions.

[1.] *The first caution. That God does manifest his love only to some at their first conversion, not to all.* Though he dearly loves every penitent soul, yet he does not manifest his love at first conversion to every penitent soul. God is a free agent, to work where he will, and when he will, and to reveal his love how he will, and when he will, and to whom he will. It is one thing for God to work a work of grace upon the soul, and another thing for God to shew the soul that work.[2]

God oftentimes works grace in a silent and secret way, and takes sometimes five, sometimes ten, sometimes fifteen, sometimes twenty years; yea, sometimes more, before he will make a clear and satisfying report of his own work upon the soul. Though our graces be our best jewels, yet they are sometimes, at first conversion, so weak and imperfect, that we are not able to see their lustre. The being of grace makes our estates safe and sure, the seeing of grace makes our lives sweet and comfortable.

[2.] *The second caution. A man may at first conversion have such a clear glorious manifestation of God's love to him, and of his interest in God, and his right to glory, that he may not have the like all his days after.*[3] The fatted calf is not every day slain, the robe of kings is not every day put on, every day must not be a festival day, a marriage day; the wife is not every day in the bosom, the child is not every day in the arms, the friend is not every day at the table, nor the soul every day under the manifestations of divine love; Jacob did not every day see the angels ascending and descending; Stephen did not every day see the heavens open, and Christ standing on the right hand of God; Paul was not every day caught up to heaven, nor John was not every day rapt up in the Spirit. No saint can every day cry out, I have my Christ, I have my comfort, I have my assurance, as the Persian king[4] cried out in his dream, 'I have Themistocles, I have Themistocles.' Job had his harp turned into mourning, and his organ into the voice of them that weep, Job xxx. 31. The best of saints are sometimes put to hang their harps upon the willows, and cry out, 'Hath God forgotten to be gracious, and will he be favourable no more?' Ps. cxxxvii. 2, lxxvii. 7–9.

[1] Pharaoh in his furious and violent pursuing after Israel, when he saw that God would bring them from under his power, was a type of Satan. The Greek word ῥήσσει, signifies to tear and rent as the dog doth.

[2] A man may enjoy the warmth and heat of the sun when he cannot see the sun, so a man may have grace when he cannot see that he hath grace.

[3] I have conversed with several precious souls that have found this true by experience, and upon this very ground have questioned all, and strongly doubted, whether that they have not taken Satan's delusions for divine manifestations.

[4] Viz., Artaxerxes, as in Plutarch and Diodorus, under Themistocles.—G.

II. The[re is a] second special season or time wherein the Lord is pleased to give to his children a sweet assurance of his favour and love, and that is, *when he intends to put them upon some high and hard, some difficult and dangerous service.*[1] Oh then he gives them some sweet taste of heaven beforehand; now he smiles, now he kisses, now he embraces the soul, now he takes a saint by the hand, now he causes his goodness and glory to pass before the soul, now he opens his bosom to the soul, now the soul shall be of his court and counsel, now the clouds shall be scattered, now it shall be no longer night with the soul, now the soul shall sit no longer mourning in the valley of darkness, now Christ will carry the soul up into the mount, and there reveal his glory to it, that it may act high and brave, noble and glorious in the face of difficulties and discouragements. Christ did intend to put Peter, James, and John upon hard and difficult service, and therefore brings them up into an high mountain, and there gives them a vision of his beauty and glory; there they see him transfigured, metamorphosed, or transformed; there they see his face shining as the sun, and his raiment glistering, Mat. xvii. 1–6. In the mount he shews them such beams of his deity, such sparkling glory, as did even amuse[2] and amaze them, transport them, and astonish them; and all this grace and glory, this goodness and sweetness Christ shews them, to hearten and encourage them to own him and his truth, to stand by him and truth, to make him and his truth known to the world, though hatred, bonds, and contempt did attend them in so doing.

Thus God dealt with Paul before he put him upon that hard and dangerous service that he had cut out for him, Acts ix. 1–23. He takes him up into heaven, and sheds abroad his love into his heart, and tells him that he is a chosen vessel; he appears to him in the way, and fills him with the Holy Ghost, that is, with the gifts, graces, and comforts of the Holy Ghost, and straightway he falls upon preaching of Christ, upon exalting of Christ, to the amazing and astonishing of all that heard him.[3] And as he had more clear, full, and glorious manifestations of God's love and favour than others, so he was more frequent, more abundant, and more constant in the work and service of Christ than others, 2 Cor. xi. 21–33.

And this hath been the constant dealing of God with the patriarchs, as with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, &c., and with the prophets, as with Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, &c.[4] When he hath put them upon weighty services, he hath shed abroad his love into their hearts, he hath set his seal upon their spirits, and made them to know that he hath set them as a seal upon his hand; he hath assured them of his countenance, and of his presence, and of his assistance; he hath told them, though others should desert them, yet he will stand by them, and strengthen

[1] 2 Cor. v. 14, Συνέχει. Divine love hath a compulsive faculty, it is very powerful to put the soul upon acting in the highest and hardest services for Christ.

[2] 'Set them musing.' Cf. Glossary, *sub voce*—G.

[3] Chrysostom saith, that he was *insatiabilis Dei cultor*, an insatiable server of God.

[4] It is sufficient to point at these instances, they are so notoriously known to all that know anything of the scripture in power. As he in Plutarch said of the Scythians, that although they had no music nor vines among them, yet, as better things, they had gods. So the saints, though they may want this and that outward encouragement in the service of God, yet they shall enjoy his presence, that is better than all other things in the world.

them, and support them, and uphold them with the right hand of his righteousness; he hath told them that his power should be theirs to defend them, and his wisdom should be theirs to direct them, and his goodness should be theirs to supply them, and his grace should be theirs to heal them, and his mercy should be theirs to pardon them, and his joy should be theirs to strengthen them, and his promise should be theirs to cheer them, and his Spirit should be theirs to lead them; and this hath made them as bold as lions, this hath made them stedfast, and stand close to the work of God in the face of all dangers and difficulties; this hath made them, with stout Nehemiah, scorn to desist or fly from the work of the Lord; this hath made their bows to abide in strength, though the archers have shot sore at them. Now there are considerable reasons why God is pleased to give his children some sweet tastes of his love, some assurance of his favour, when he puts them upon some hard and difficult service, and they are these that follow.

(1.) *The first reason, That they may not faint nor falter in his service, but go through it resolutely and bravely, in the face of all difficulties and oppositions.*[1] When God put Joshua upon that hard service of leading and governing his people Israel, he assures him of his love and of his presence: 'Fear not, be of good courage, I am with thee,' Joshua i. 6. And this makes him hold on and hold out in the service of the Lord bravely and resolutely, in the face of all discouragements: 'Choose you whom you will serve, whether your fathers' gods or the gods of the Amorites; but as for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord,' Joshua xxiv. 15. So when the Lord put Paul upon such service that occasioned bonds and afflictions to abide him in every city, Acts xx. 23, he gives him a taste of heaven beforehand, and lifts up the light of his countenance upon him, and this makes him resolute and bold in the work of the Lord. Now Paul will not consult with flesh and blood, Gal. i. 15–17; now it is not reproaches, nor stripes, nor prisons, nor whips, nor perils, nor deaths, that can make him look back, having put his hand to the Lord's plough. Oh! the beamings forth of divine love upon his soul filled him with that courage and resolution that, with Shammah, one of David's worthies, he stands and defends the field, when others fall, and fly, and quit the field, 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17.

(2.) *The second reason:* God gives his people some tastes of his love, some sense of his favour, when he puts them upon hard and difficult services, *because else he should not only act below himself, as he is a wise God, a faithful God, a powerful God, a merciful God, a righteous God, &c., but also act below his poor weak creatures.*[2] For what husband will put his wife, what father will put his child, what master will put his servant, what captain will put his soldier, what prince will put his ambassadors, upon hard and difficult services, but they will smile upon them, and speak kindly to them, and make large promises to honour their persons, and kindly to accept, and nobly to reward their services, &c. Surely none. And will God? Will God, who will not give his glory to those that have the most glorious beings, suffer his

[1] Apollonius, as Philostratus reports, being asked if he did not tremble at the sight of the tyrant, made this answer: God, which hath given him a terrible countenance, hath given also unto me an undaunted heart, &c.

[2] And to imagine that ever the great God will act below the wisdom of those that are foolishness in the very abstract, is the greatest madness and blasphemy in the world.

glory to be clouded and eclipsed by the prudent actings of weak worms? Surely no. Isa. xlii. 8, and xlviii. 11.

(3.) *The third reason:* God lifts up the light of his countenance upon his people when he puts them upon hard and difficult services, *that they may never repent of listing themselves in his service.*[1] Ah! did not the Lord warm the hearts of his people with the glorious beams of his love, when he puts them upon hard work, they would be ready, when they meet with oppositions and hazards, to throw up all, and to sit down lamenting and repenting that ever they were engaged in his service. They would be as peevish and froward as Jonah, and with him venture a drowning, to shift off God's service.[2] Ah! but now the Lord, by letting his goodness drop upon their hearts, and by putting an earnest-penny into their hands, he causes them to go cheerfully on in his work, without sighing or repenting. The kisses and embraces of God do put such life, such spirit, such mettle into their souls, as makes them bid defiance to the greatest dangers, and as crowns them conquerors of the greatest difficulties. Ah! says a soul that hath walked some turns in paradise, What is dross to gold! what is darkness to light! what is hell to heaven! No more are all difficulties and oppositions to me, who have found the sweetness of divine grace, and have had the happiness to lie in the bosom of God.

Diocletian, the worst and last persecutor in all the ten persecutions, observed, 'that the more he sought to blot out the name of Christ, the more it became legible; and to block up the way of Christ, the more it became passable; and whatever of Christ he thought to root out, it rooted the deeper, and rose the higher in the hearts and lives of the saints, among whom he had scattered the beams of his love and the rich pearls of his grace.'[3] Such souls as have once been in the arms of God, in the midst of all oppositions, they are as men made all of fire walking in stubble; they consume and overcome all oppositions; all difficulties are but as whetstones to their fortitude. The moon will run her course, though the dogs bark at it; so will all those choice souls that have found warmth under Christ's wings run their Christian race in spite of all difficulties and dangers. The horse neighs at the trumpet, the leviathan laughs at the spear; so does a saint, under the power of assurance, laugh at all hazards and dangers that he meets with in the Lord's service. The sense of God's love and goodness makes him to triumph over the greatest difficulties.

(4.) *The fourth reason*, and lastly: God gives his people some tastes of his love when he puts them upon hard and difficult services, that *the mouths of the wicked may be stopped.* Should God lay heavy burdens upon his people's shoulders, and not put under his fingers to give some ease; should God double their tale of brick, and yet deny them straw; should God engage them against a potent enemy, and then desert them; should God send them upon some weighty embassage, and not give proportionable encouragements to them, what would the

[1] *Solus amor nescit difficultates*, love knows no difficulties.

[2] Melancthon was such a man, whom Luther encourages thus: Why should we fear a conquered world, that have Christ the conqueror on our side? &c. [Correspondence during the Diet of Augsburg, 1530. Cf. Sibbes's Works, vol. i. p. 126.—G.]

[3] As they said once of the Grecians in the epigram, whom they thought invulnerable, We shoot at them, but they fall not down; we wound them, and yet not kill them.

world say? Exod. xxxii. 12, Num. xiv. 12–16. Would they not say that he is a hard master, and that his ways are not equal? Would they not say, Verily they are liars that say he is glorious in power, and wonderful in counsel, and infinite in mercy, and admirable in goodness, and rich in grace, and unsearchable in his understanding? For surely were he, he could not, he would not, put his children upon such hard and dangerous services, but he would own them, and stand by them; he would assist them, and smile upon them; he would be as careful to bring them bravely off, as he hath been ready to bring them freely on Oh! he could not see them in garments rolled in blood, but his bowels would yearn towards them, and he would arise, and have mercy on them.

III. Then, thirdly, *Waiting times are times wherein God is pleased to give his people some secret tastes of his love, and to lift up the light of his countenance upon them:* 'I waited patiently[1] for the Lord,' saith David, 'and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit' (or out of a pit of noise), 'out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God,' Ps. xl. 1–3. After God had exercised David's patience in waiting, he sweetly breaks in upon him, and knocks off his bolts, and opens the prison doors, and takes him by the hand, and leads him out of the pit of noise and confusion, in which he was, and causes his love and goodness so to beam forth upon him as causes his heart to rejoice, and his tongue to sing. So after devout Simeon had waited for the consolation of Israel, that is, for Christ's coming, the Holy Ghost falls upon him, and leads him to a sight of Christ in the temple, and this makes the good old man sing, *Nunc dimittis*, Now, let thy servant depart in peace, Luke ii. 25–33. Ah! says Simeon, I have lived long enough! now I have got Christ in my heart, and Christ in my arms, who is my light, my life, my love, my joy, my crown, let me depart, according to thy word. Ah! saints, I appeal to you, have not many of you found by experience the sweet breathings of Christ upon you, even whilst you have been waiting at the door of mercy? while you have been weeping and waiting, hath not the Lord Jesus come in and said, 'Peace be to you'; 'Waiting souls, be of good cheer, it is I; be of good cheer, your sins are pardoned'? Surely you have. Hath not God made that word good unto you, 'Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord'? Ps. xxvii. 24; yes. And hath he not made that good to you, 'They shall not be ashamed that wait for me'? Isa. xlix. 23;[2] that is, they shall not be deceived, or disappointed of their hopes and expectations, that wait for me. Yes. And have you not found that word made sweet to your souls, 'Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious: blessed are all they that wait for him'? Yes. And hath not the Lord made that word good to you, 'The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul

[1] קוה קויתי waiting, I waited.

[2] These words, 'shall not be ashamed,' in the Hebrew dialect, do not simply import that such shall not be brought to shame, or shall not perish, but that he shall be advanced to great dignity and glory, to everlasting happiness and blessedness.

that seeketh him'? Lam. iii. 25. Yes. Waiting souls, remember this assurance is yours, but the time of giving it is the Lord's; the jewel is yours, but the season in which he will give it is in his own hand; the gold chain is yours, but he only knows the hour wherein he will put it about your necks. Well! wait patiently and quietly, wait expectingly, wait believingly, wait affectionately, and wait diligently, and you shall find that scripture made good in power upon your souls, 'Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry,' Heb. x. 37, (μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον), Hab. ii. 3. He will certainly come, he will seasonably come, he will suddenly come, as the prophet Malachi speaks: 'Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts,' Mal. iii. 1. Well! I will say but this, if assurance of God's love be not a jewel worth a waiting for, it is worth nothing.

IV. Fourthly, *Suffering times are times wherein the Lord is pleased to give his people some sense of his favour.*[1] When they are in sufferings for righteousness' sake, for the gospel's sake, then usually God causes his face to shine upon them.[2] Now they shall hear best news from heaven when they hear worst from earth. God loves to smile most upon his people when the world frowns most. When the world puts their iron chains upon their legs, then God puts his golden chains about their necks; when the world puts a bitter cup into their hands, then God drops some of his honey, some of his goodness and sweetness into it. When the world is ready to stone them, then God gives them the white stone; and when the world is a-tearing their good names, then he gives them a new name, that none knows but he that hath it, a name that is better than that of sons and daughters. When the world cries out, 'Crucify them, crucify them,' then they hear that sweet voice from heaven, 'These are my beloved ones, in whom I am well pleased.' When the world clothes them with rags, then the Lord puts on his royal robes, and makes a secret proclamation to their spirits, 'Thus shall it be done to the men whom the King is pleased to honour.' When the world gives into one hand a cup of water, God gives into the other a cup of nectar, a cup of ambrosia. When the world gnasheth upon them, and presents all imaginary tortures before them, then the Lord opens paradise to them, as he did to Stephen. When Paul and Silas were in prison for the gospel's sake, then God fills them with such unspeakable joy, that they cannot but be singing when others were sleeping, Acts xvi. 23, 24. God turns their prison into a palace, a paradise, and they turn his mercies into praises. Paul and Silas found more pleasure than pain, more joy than sorrow, more sweet than bitter, more day than night, in the prison.[3]

God will make some beams of his goodness and glory to break through stone walls, to warm and glad the hearts of his suffering ones.

[1] *Non pœna sed causa facit martyrem.*

[2] *Adversus gentes, gratias agimus quod à molestis dominis liberemur*, saith one: We thank you for delivering us from hard taskmasters, that we may enjoy more sweetly the bosom of Christ.

[3] Methinks, said one, I tread upon pearls, when he trod upon hot burning coals: and I feel no more pain than if I lay in a bed of down; and yet he lay in flames of fire.

When John was banished into the isle of Patmos, 'for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus,' Rev. i. 9, 10, then he is filled with the Spirit, and hath the choicest manifestations, and the most glorious revelations that ever he had all his days.[1] Now God makes him one of his court and counsel, and tells him what glorious and mighty things shall be in the latter days. Now he is in a spiritual rapture and ecstasy, and carried above himself, and above all outward things, to attend those glorious visions that God would make known to him.

It was God's lifting up the light of his countenance that made the martyrs to sing in the fire, to clap their hands in the flames, and to tread upon hot burning coals as upon beds of roses. This made one say, when he felt the flame come to his beard, 'What a small pain is this, to be compared to the glory to come? What is a drop of vinegar put into an ocean of wine? What is it for one to have a rainy day, that is going to take possession of a kingdom?[2] The smiles of God made another to sing under dreadful sufferings, *Christianus sum*, I am a Christian;[3] and this made the Christians to sing, in Tertullian's time, *Crudelitas vestra gloria nostra*, your cruelty is our glory.[4]

This made a French martyr to say, when the rope was about his fellow's neck, 'Give me that golden chain, and dub me a knight of that noble order.' This made another to desire, when he was to die, the favour of having his chains buried with him, as the ensigns of his honour.[5]

This made Basil say, 'Fire, sword, prison, famine, are all a pleasure, a delight unto me.' This made Paul to rattle his iron chains, and to glory in it, more than worldly men glory in all their outward glory.

This made Theodoret to complain, that his persecutors did him wrong, when they took him off the rack, and ceased tormenting of him; for, said he, 'All the while I was on the rack, I found methought there was a young man in white, an angel stood by me, which wiped off the sweat; and I found a great deal of sweetness in it, which now I have lost.[6]

To conclude, the smiles of God upon the prisoners of hope, is that which makes them more cheerful and delightful in their sufferings than Jesus Christ was in his.

When Faninus, an Italian martyr, was asked by one, why he was so merry at his death, sith Christ himself was so sorrowful: 'Christ,' said he, 'sustained in his soul all the sorrows and conflicts with hell and death, due to us, by whose sufferings we are delivered from sorrow, and fear of them all; and therefore we have cause of rejoicing in the greatest sufferings.[7]

Now there are these special reasons to be given, why the Lord is pleased in suffering times to visit his people with his loving-kindness, and to lift up the light of his countenance upon them.

[1] He was banished thither by Domitian, the tyrant. *Vide* Euseb. lib. iii. cap. xviii.; *vide* Pliny, lib. iv. cap. xii. [Rather cap. xxiii., The Sporades.—G.]

[2] Vincentius. [Clarke's 'Martyrologie,' *as before*, pp. 34, 36.—G.]

[3] Sanctus. [*Ibid.* p. 31.—G.]

[4] Apology.—G.

[5] *Nihil sentit crux in nervo, quando animus est in cælo.* [The reference is to Fournier of Chalons. Clarke, *as before*, pp. 233, 234.—G.]

[6] Sufferings are the ensigns of heavenly nobility. No wonder then that the saints are so joyful under them. [Clarke, as before.—G.]

[7] *Ibid.*—G.

(1.) *The first reason. That their patience and constancy under the cross may be invincible.*[1] God knows right well, that if his left hand in suffering times be not under his people, and his right hand over them, if he does not give them some sips of sweetness, some relishes of goodness, they would quickly grow impatient and inconstant. Oh, but now the smiles of God, the gracious discoveries of God, makes their patience and constancy invincible, as it did Vincentius, who by his patience and constancy madded his tormentors; wherefore they stripped him stark naked, whipped his body all over to a gore blood, sprinkled salt and vinegar over all his wounds, set his feet on burning coals, then cast him naked into a loathsome dungeon, the pavement whereof was sharp shells, and his bed to lie on a bundle of thorns. All which this blessed martyr received, without so much as a groan, breathing out his spirit in these words, 'Vincentius is my name, and by the grace of God I will be still Vincentius, in spite of all your torments.' Persecution brings death in one hand and life in the other; for while it kills the body it crowns the soul.[2]

The most cruel martyrdom is but a crafty trick to escape death, to pass from life to life, from the prison to paradise, from the cross to the crown.

Justin Martyr says, that when the Romans did immortalise their emperors, as they called it, they brought one to swear that he see [saw?] him go to heaven out of the fire. But we may see, by an eye of faith, the blessed souls of suffering saints fly to heaven, like Elias in his fiery chariot, like the angel that appeared to Manoah in the flames, Judges xiii. 20.[3]

John Huss, martyr, had such choice discoveries of God, and such sweet incomes of the Spirit, as made his patience and constancy invincible. When he was brought forth to be burned, they put on his head a triple crown of paper, painted over with ugly devils; but when he saw it, he said, 'My Lord Jesus Christ, for my sake, did wear a crown of thorns; why should not I then for his sake wear this light crown, be it never so ignominious? Truly I will do it, and that willingly.' And as they tied his neck with a chain to the stake, smiling, he said, 'That he would willingly receive the same chain for Jesus Christ's sake, who he knew was bound with a far worse chain for his sake.'[4] Well! remember this, their names that by a patient suffering are written in red letters of blood in the church's calendar, are written in golden letters in Christ's register, in the book of life.

(2.) *The second reason.* A second reason why the Lord lifts up the light of his countenance upon his people in suffering times, and that is, *for the confirmation of some, for the conversion of others, and for the greater conviction and confusion of their adversaries, who wonder, and are like men amazed, when they see the comfort and the courage*

[1] Christian fortitude is *in ferendo, non in feriendo*, not in smiting, but suffering.

[2] Wil. Flower, Apollonius, Basil, Fulgentius, Giles of Brussels, Alexander, Hales, Polycarpus, Calvin, Luther, Brentius, Bullinger, these and many more have been eminent in patience under sore trials. [See Clarke, as before, *sub nominibus*.—G.]

[3] A patient man under reproaches, is like a man with a sword in one hand, and a salve in the other; he could wound, but he will heal. The motto of patient souls is, *Plura pro Christo toleranda*, we must suffer more than so for Christ.

[4] Clarke, as before.—G.

of the saints in suffering times. Paul's choice carriage in his bonds was the confirmation of many. 'And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear,' Philip. i. 14: *vide* Estius. And as the sufferings of the saints do contribute to the confirmation of some, so by the blessing of God they contribute to the conversion of others. 'I beseech thee,' says Paul, 'for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds,' Philemon 10. It was a notable saying of Luther, *Ecclesia totum mundum convertit sanguine et oratione*, The church converteth the whole world by blood and prayer.[1] Basil affirms,[2] that the primitive saints shewed so much heroic zeal and constancy, that many of the heathens turned Christians; so that choice spirit that the saints have shewed in their sufferings, when Christ hath overshadowed them with his love, and 'stayed them with flagons, and comforted them with apples,' Cant. ii. 5, hath madded, grieved, vexed, and extremely tormented their tormentors.[3]

Lactantius boasts of the braveness of the martyrs in his time: 'Our children and women, not to speak of men, do in silence overcome their tormentors, and the fire cannot so much as fetch a sigh from them.'

Hegesippus reports an observation of Antoninus the emperor, viz., 'That the Christians were most courageous and confident always in earthquakes, whilst his own heathen soldiers were at such accidents most fearful and dispirited.' Certainly no earthquakes can make any heartquakes among the suffering saints, so long as the countenance of God shines upon their face, and his love lies warm upon their hearts. The suffering saint may be assaulted, but not vanquished; he may be troubled, but can never be conquered; he may lose his head, but he cannot lose his crown, which the righteous Lord hath prepared and laid up for him, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. The suffering saint shall still be master of the day; though they kill him, they cannot hurt him;[4] he may suffer death, but never conquest. 'And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death,' Rev. xii. 11. They love not their lives that love Christ and his truth more than their lives; they that slight, contemn, and despise their lives, when they stand in competition with Christ, may be truly said not to love their lives. In these words you see that the saints by dying do overcome: 'They may kill me,' said Socrates of his enemies, 'but they cannot hurt me.'[5] A saint may say this and more. The herb *heliotropium* doth turn about and open itself according to the motion of the sun; so do the saints in their sufferings, according to the internal motions of the Sun of righteousness upon them.[6]

(3.) *The third reason,* A third reason why the Lord causes his goodness to pass before his people, and his face to shine upon his people in

[1] They knew it could be but a day's journey between the cross and paradise, between that short storm and an eternal calm.

[2] Qu. Justin Martyr, as before? See Index, *sub nomine.*—G.

[3] It would be too tedious to give you an account of all particular persecutors in this case, whom the courage, faith, and patience of the saints have tired out and made weary of their lives, and also bred wonder and astonishment in beholders and readers.

[4] *Mori posse, vinci non posse.* [5] Plato, Phædo.—G.

[6] O Lord Jesus, said one, I love thee, *plusquam mea, plusquam meos, plusquam me*, more than all goods, more than all my friends, yea, more than my very life.

suffering times, and that is, *for the praise of his own grace, and for the glory of his own name.* God would lose much of his own glory, if he should not stand by his people, and comfort them and strengthen them, in the day of their sorrows. Ah the dirt, the scorn, the contempt, that vain men would cast upon God, Exod. xxxii. 12, Num. xiv. 13. Look, as our greatest good comes through the sufferings of Christ, so God's greatest glory that he hath from his saints comes through their sufferings: 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified,' 1 Pet. iv. 14 [*vide* Bezam]. It makes much for the glory of God, that his people are cheered and comforted, quickened and raised, spiritualised and elevated in the day of their sufferings. Oh the sight of so noble a spirit in the saints, causes others to admire God, to lift up God, to fall in love with God, and to glorify God; for owning his people, and for being a light to them in darkness, a joy to them in sorrow, and a palace to them in prison.[1] God is very sensible of the many praises and prayers that he should lose, did he not cause his love and his glory to rest upon his people in suffering times. There is nothing that God is so tender of, as he is of his glory, and that his heart is so much set upon as his glory; and therefore he will visit them in a prison, and feast them in a dungeon, and walk with them in a fiery furnace, and shew kindness to them in a lion's den, that every one may shout and cry, Grace, grace![2] God loves to act in such ways of grace towards his suffering ones, as may stop the mouths of their enemies, and cause the hearts of his friends to rejoice.

(4.) *The fourth reason. Believing times are times wherein the Lord is graciously pleased* to lift up the light of his countenance upon his people. When his children are in the exercise of faith, then the Lord is pleased to make known his goodness, and to seal up to them everlasting happiness and blessedness: Eph. i. 13, 'In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise;' or in whom believing ye were sealed, that is, as you were in the very exercise and actings of faith upon the Lord Jesus Christ, the Spirit of the Lord made sure, and sealed up to you your adoption, your reconciliation, your pardon, and everlasting inheritance.[3]

Him that honours Christ by believing, by fresh and frequent acts of faith upon him, him will Christ certainly honour and secure by setting his seal and mark upon him, and by assuring of him of a kingdom that shakes not, of riches that corrupt not, and of glory that fades not. Ah Christians! you wrong two at once, Christ and your own souls, whilst you thus reason: Lord, give me first assurance, and then I will believe in thee and rest upon thee; whereas your great work is to believe, and to hold on believing and acting of faith on the Lord Jesus, till you come to be assured and sealed up to the day of redemption. This is the surest and shortest way to assurance.

That is a remarkable passage of the apostle in Rom. xv. 13, 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye

[1] Dan. iii. 28–30, Dan. vi. 25–27.
[2] Isa. xlviii. 11; Gen. xxxix. 20; Dan. vi. 10; Zech. iv. 7.
[3] ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς, ακουσαντες. . . . Vide *Beza and Calvin.*

may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.' 'The God of hope,' saith the apostle, 'shall fill you with all joy and peace in believing.' That is, whilst you are in the exercise and actings of faith, the God of hope shall fill you with that joy that is 'unspeakable and full of glory,' and with that 'peace that passes understanding.'[1]

Faith is the key that unlocks paradise, and lets in a flood of joy into the soul. Faith is an appropriating grace, it appropriates all to itself; it looks upon God, and says with the psalmist, 'This God is my God for ever and ever,' Ps. lxiii. 1, and xlviii. 14. It looks upon Christ and says, 'My beloved is mine, and his desires are towards me,' Cant. vii. 10. It looks upon the precious promises and says, These 'precious promises' are mine, 2 Peter i. 4. It looks upon heaven and says, 'Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,' 2 Tim. iv. 8; and this fills the soul with joy and peace. Faith hath an influence upon other graces, it is like a silver thread that runs through a chain of pearl, it puts strength and vivacity into all other virtues. It made Abraham to rejoice, and it made Noah sit still and quiet in the midst of a deluge; *tantum possumus, quantum credimus.*

Faith is the first pin that moveth the soul; it is the spring in the watch that sets all the golden wheels of love, joy, comfort, and peace a-going. Faith is a root-grace, from whence springs all the sweet flowers of joy and peace. Faith is like the bee, it will suck sweetness out of every flower; it will extract light out of darkness, comforts out of distresses, mercies out of miseries, wine out of water, honey out of the rock, and meat out of the eater, Judges xiv. 14. 1 Peter i. 8, 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' Upon the exercise of faith, their hearts are filled with joy, with unspeakable joy, with glorious joy. Faith sees in Christ *plenitudo abundantiæ* and *plenitudo redundantiæ*, a fulness of abundance and a fulness of redundancy; and this fills the heart with glorious joy.

Ah, Christians! believing, believing is the ready way, the safest way, the sweetest way, the shortest way, the only way to a well grounded assurance, and to that unspeakable joy and peace that flows from it, as the effect from the cause, the fruit from the root, the stream from the fountain. There is such assurance, and such joy that springs from the fresh and frequent actings of faith, that cannot be expressed, that cannot be painted. No man can paint the sweetness of the honeycomb, the sweetness of a cluster of Canaan, the sweetness of paradise, the fragrancy of the rose of Sharon. As the being of things cannot be painted, and as the sweetness of things cannot be painted, no more can that assurance and joy that flows from believing be painted or expressed; it is too great and too glorious for weak man to paint or set forth.[2]

When Abraham believed in hope against hope, Rom. iv. 18, and when in the face of all dangers and difficulties, he put forth such noble and glorious acts of faith, as to conclude that 'the Lord would provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering,' Gen. xxii. 8, and that 'in the mount

[1] πληρώσαι, shall fill you, from πληρόω, that signifies to be filled with joy and peace, as the sails of a ship are filled with wind.

[2] There is in Christ not only *plenitudo vasis*, but *plenitudo fontis*, the fulness of a vessel, but the fulness of a fountain; and this makes the heart of a saint leap, when he sees it by an eye of faith.

he would be seen,' Gen. xxii. 14; God is so taken with the actings of his faith and the effects of it, that he swears by himself, that 'in blessing he would bless him;' that is, I will certainly bless him, and will bless his blessing to him; 'and in multiplying, he would multiply his seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore,' Gen. xxii. 17. Now the angel of the Lord, viz., the Lord Jesus, as his own words shew, verses 12, 15, 16, calls unto Abraham, out of heaven, not once but twice; and now he shews his admirable love in countermanding of Abraham, and in providing a ram, even to a miracle, for a burnt offering.[1]

And thus you see that believing times are times wherein the Lord is graciously pleased to reveal his love, and make known his favour to his people, and to look from heaven upon them, and to speak again and again in love and sweetness to them.

V. *Fifthly, Hearing and receiving times are times wherein the Lord is graciously pleased to cause his face to shine upon his people.*[2] When they are a-hearing the word of life and a-breaking the bread of life, then God comes in upon them, and declares to them that love that is better than life: Acts x. 44, 'While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.' As Peter was speaking, the Holy Ghost, that is, the graces of the Holy Ghost, viz., the joy, the comfort, the love, the peace, &c., of the Holy Ghost, fell upon them. So in Gal. iii. 2, 'This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?'

By the Spirit here, Calvin and Bullinger and other expositors, do understand the joy, the peace, the assurance that is wrought in the heart by the hearing of faith, that is, by the doctrine of the gospel; for in these words of the apostle, hearing is put for the thing heard, and faith for the doctrine of the gospel, because the gospel is the ordinary means of working faith. 'Faith comes by hearing,' saith the apostle, Rom. x. 17. So 1 Thes. i. 5, 6, 'For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.'[3]

In these words you have a divine power attending Paul's ministry, a power convincing, enlightening, humbling, raising, delighting, reforming, renewing, and transforming of them that heard him. Also you have the sweet and blessed testimony of the Spirit attending his ministry, and assuring those of their effectual calling and election, upon whom the word came in power, and raising up their spirits to joy in the midst of sorrow. Ah! you precious sons and daughters of Zion, that have sat waiting and trembling at Wisdom's door, tell me, tell me, hath not God

[1] *Dominus providebit*, the Lord will provide, was Maximilian's pious motto. and should be every saint's motto in straits and troubles.

[2] Ps. lxiii. 3, 4. Also by the Holy Ghost is meant the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, ver. 45, 46, Acts xi. 15. Therefore, says the apostle, do not leave the substance for a shadow, the sun for a candle, and solid meat for milk; which none would do, except they were bewitched.

[3] By the Holy Ghost in this text cannot be meant the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, and that, first, because they were no evidences of election; secondly, because many vessels of wrath have been partakers of them; thirdly, many of God's choice and chosen ones have been destitute of those extraordinary gifts.

rained down manna upon your souls whilst you have been hearing the word? Yes. Hath not God come in with power upon you, and by his Spirit sealed up to you your election, the remission of your sins, the justification of your persons, and the salvation of your souls? Yes, without controversy, many saints have found Christ's lips, in this ordinance, to drop honey and sweetness, marrow and fatness.

And as Christ in hearing times, when his people are a-hearing the word of life, does lift up the light of his countenance upon them; so when they are a-receiving the bread of life, he makes known his love to them, and their interest in him. In this feast of fat things, the master of the feast, the Lord Jesus, comes in the midst of his guests, saying, 'Peace be here.'[1] Here the beams of his glory do so shine, as that they cause the hearts of children to burn within them, and as scatters all that thick darkness and cloud that are gathered about them. When saints are in this wine-cellar, Christ's banner over them is love; when they are in this Canaan, then he feeds them with milk and honey; when they are in this paradise, then they shall taste of angels' food; when they are at this gate of heaven, then they shall see Christ at the right of the Father; when they are before his mercy-seat, then they shall see the bowels of mercy rolling towards them. In this ordinance they see that, and taste that, and feel that of Christ, that they are not able to declare and manifest to others; in this ordinance saints shall see the truth of their graces, and feel the increase of their graces, and rejoice in the clearness of their evidences; in this ordinance Christ will seal up the promises, and seal up the covenant, and seal up his love, and seal up their pardon sensibly to their souls. Many precious souls there be that have found Christ in this ordinance, when they could not find him in other ordinances, though they have sought him sorrowingly.[2] Many a cold soul hath been warmed in this ordinance, and many a hungry soul hath been fed with manna in this ordinance, and many a thirsty soul hath been refreshed with wine upon the lees in this ordinance, and many a dull soul hath been quickened in this ordinance.[3] I do not say that ever a dead soul hath been enlivened in this ordinance, this being an ordinance appointed by Christ, not to beget spiritual life where there was none, but to increase it where the Spirit hath formerly begun it.[4] In this ordinance, weak hands and feeble knees have been strengthened, and fainting hearts have been comforted, and questioning souls have been resolved, and staggering souls have been settled, and falling souls have been supported. Ah, Christians! if you will but stand up and speak out, you must say, that in this ordinance, there hath been between Christ and you such mutual kisses, such mutual embraces, such mutual opening and shutting of hands, such mutual opening and closing of hearts, as hath made such a heaven in your hearts as cannot be expressed, as cannot be declared. Christ in this ordinance opens such boxes of precious ointment, as fill the saints with a spiritual savour;

[1] Gen. xxii. 8. This ordinance is a cabinet of jewels; in it are abundance of spiritual springs, and rich mines, heavenly treasures.

[2] Every gracious soul may say, not only *Credo vitam æternam et edo vitam æternam*, I believe life eternal, but I receive, I eat life eternal.

[3] The Supper of the Lord. Cf. *supra*.—G.

[4] Every wicked soul that takes the cup may say, *Calix vitæ calix mortis*, the cup of life is made my death, 1 Cor. xi. 27.

he gives them a cluster of the grapes of Canaan, that makes them earnestly look and long to be in Canaan.[1] The Christians in the primitive times, upon their receiving the sacrament, were wont to be filled with that zeal and fervour, with that joy and comfort, with that faith, fortitude, and assurance, that made them to appear before the tyrants with transcendent boldness and cheerfulness, as many writers do testify. Now there are these reasons why God is pleased to lift up the light of his countenance upon his people, when they are a-hearing the word of life, and a-breaking the bread of life.

(1.) *The first reason. That they may highly prize the ordinances, the choice discoveries that God makes to their souls in them, works them to set a very high price upon them.* Oh! says our souls, we cannot but affect them for what of God we have enjoyed in them, Ps. lxxxiv. 10, 11. Many there are that are like old Barzillai, that had lost his taste and hearing, and so cared not for David's feasts and music, 2 Sam. xix. 32, *seq.* So many there are that can see nothing of God, nor taste nothing of God in ordinances: they care not for ordinances, they slight ordinances.[2] Oh! but souls that have seen, and heard, and tasted of the goodness of the Lord in ordinances, they dearly love them, and highly prize them:[3] 'I have esteemed thy word,' says Job, 'above my necessary food,' Job xxiii. 12. And David sings it out: 'The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver' [Ps. cxix. 72]. Luther prized the word at such a high rate that he saith he would not live in paradise, if he might, without the word: *At cum verbo etiam in inferno facile est vivere,* but with the word he could live in hell itself, Ps. xxvii. 4.

(2.) *The second reason.* God lifts up the light of his countenance upon his people in ordinances, *that he may keep them close to ordinances and constant in ordinances.* The soul shall hear good news from heaven when it is waiting at wisdom's door, Prov. viii. 34, 35. God will acquaint the soul with spiritual mysteries, and feed it with the droppings of the honeycomb, that the soul may cleave to them as Ruth did to Naomi, and say of them as she said of her: 'Where these go, I will go; where these lodge, I will lodge,' Ruth i. 15–17; and nothing but death shall make a separation between ordinances and my soul. After Joshua had had a choice presence of God with his spirit in the service he was put upon, he makes a proclamation, 'Choose you whom you will serve, I and my household will serve the Lord,' John xxiv. 15. Let the issue be what it will, I will cleave to the service of my God; I will set my soul under God's spout, I will wait for him in his temple, Malachi iii. 1; I will look for him in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, Rev. ii. 1; I have found him a good master; I will live and die in his service; I have found his work to be better than wages; I have found a reward, not only for keeping, but also '*in* keeping his commandments,' as the psalmist speaks, Ps. xix. 11. The good works, the sweet aspects, the choice hints, the heavenly intercourse that hath been between the Lord Jesus and my soul, in his service, hath put such great

[1] Num. xiii. 23–25; Cyprian, l. 4; Ep. vi. Augustine on John, tract. xxvii. &c.

[2] Ps. lxiii. 2, 3; Cant. ii. 3; Ps. xix. 10. This age is full of careless Gallios, Acts xviii. 17, that care not for these things.

[3] Better that the sun shine not, than that Chrysostom preach not.

and glorious engagements upon my soul that I cannot but say with the servant in the law, 'I love my master, and I will not quit his service, because it is well with me; my ear is bored, and I will be his servant for ever,' Exod. xxi. 5; Deut. xv. 16, 17.

(3.) *The third reason* why the Lord causes the beams of his love, and the brightness of his glory to shine forth upon his people in ordinances is, *To fence and strengthen their souls against all those temptations that they may meet with from Satan and his instruments, that lie in wait to deceive,*[1] *and by their cunning craftiness endeavour with all their might* to work men first to have low thoughts of ordinances, and then to neglect them, and then to despise them. Now the Lord by the sweet discoveries of himself, by the kisses and love-tokens that he gives to his people in ordinances, does so endear and engage their hearts to them, that they are able not only to withstand temptations, but also to triumph over temptations, through him that hath loved them, and in ordinances manifested his presence, and the riches of his grace and goodness, to them. The sweet converse, the blessed turns and walks that the saints have with God in ordinances, makes them strong in resisting, and happy in conquering of those temptations that tend to lead them from the ordinances; which are Christ's banqueting-house, where he sets before his people all the dainties and sweetmeats of heaven, and bids them eat and drink abundantly, there being no danger of surfeiting in eating or drinking of Christ's delicates. Truly, many a soul hath surfeited of the world's dainties, and died for ever; but there is not a soul that hath had the honour and happiness to be brought into Christ's banqueting-house, and to eat and drink of his dainties, but they have lived for ever.[2]

(4.) *The fourth reason* why the Lord is pleased to give his people some sense of his love, and some taste of heaven in ordinances, is, *That he may fit and ripen them for heaven, and make them look and long more after a perfect, complete, and full enjoyment of God.* Souls at first conversion are but rough-cast, but God, by visiting of them, and manifesting of himself to them in his ways, doth more and more fit those vessels of mercy for glory, Isa. lxiv. 5. Ah! Christians, tell me, do not those holy influences, those spiritual breathings, those divine in-comes, that you meet with in ordinances, make your souls cry out with David, 'As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, even for the living God: When shall I come and appear before the presence of God?' Ps. xlii. 1, 2. So in Ps. lxiii. 1. 2, 'O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.'[3] In these words you have David's strong,

[1] Eph. iv. 14. *κυβεία* signifies cogging with a die; such sleights as cheaters and false gamesters use at dice.

[2] Chrysostom saith, that by the sacrament of the Lord's supper, we are so armed against Satan's temptations, that he fleeth from us as if we were so many *leones ignem expuentes*, lions that spit fire. Cant. ii. 4, בית היין is *domus vini*, the house of wine.

[3] The Greeks derive their word for *desire* from a root that signifieth to *burn*. Now, if one should heap never so much fuel upon a fire, it would not quench it, but kindle it the more. So nothing can satisfy the desires of a saint but a full celestial enjoyment of God.

earnest, and vehement desires; here you have desire upon desire; here you have the very flower and vigour of his spirit, the strength and sinews of his soul, the prime and top of his inflamed affections, all strongly working after a fuller enjoyment of God. Look, as the espoused maid longs for the marriage day, the apprentice for his freedom, the captive for his ransom, the condemned man for his pardon, the traveller for his inn, and the mariner for his haven; so doth a soul, that hath met with God in his ordinances, long to meet with God in heaven. It is not a drop, it is not a lap and away, a sip and away, that will suffice such a soul.[1] No. This soul will never be quiet, till it sees God face to face, till it be quiet in the bosom of God. The more a saint tastes of God in an ordinance, the more are his desires raised and whetted, and the more are his teeth set on edge for more and more of God. Plutarch saith, that when 'once the Gauls had tasted of the sweet wine that was made of the grapes of Italy, nothing would satisfy them but Italy, Italy.[2] So a soul that hath tasted of the sweetness and goodness of God in ordinances, nothing will satisfy it, but more of that goodness and sweetness.[3] A little mercy may save the soul, but it must be a great deal of mercy that must satisfy the soul. The least glimpse of God's countenance may be a staff to support the soul, and an ark to secure the soul, and a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to guide the soul; but it must be much, very much of God, that must be enough to satisfy the soul.

(5.) *The fifth reason.* The fifth and last reason why the Lord is graciously pleased to give his people some sense of his love, and some assurance of his favour in ordinances, is, *That they may have wherewithal to silence and stop the mouths of wicked and ungodly men, whose words are stout against the Lord;* who say, it is in vain to serve God, and what profit is there in keeping his statutes and ordinances, and in walking mournfully before the Lord of hosts? Mal. iii. 13, 14. Now the Lord causes his face to shine upon his people in ordinances, that they may stand up, and bear him witness before the wicked world, that he is no hard master, that he reaps not where he sows not.[4] In ordinances he kisses them, and there he gives them his love, and makes known his goodness and glory, that his children may, from their own experiences, be able to confute all the lies and clamours of wicked men against God and his ways. And blessed be God, that hath not left himself without witness, but hath many thousands that can stand up before all the world and declare, that they have seen 'the beauty and glory of God in his sanctuary,' that they have met with those joys and comforts in the ways of God, that do as far surpass all other joys and comforts, as light does darkness, as heaven does hell, that they

[1] It is not drops, but swimming in the ocean, that will satisfy a soul that hath looked into paradise.

[2] Plutarch *in vita Camilli.*

[3] A full enjoyment of God is the most sparkling diamond in the ring of glory.

[4] The saints, by the gracious experiences that they have of the sweet breathings of God upon them in ordinances, are able to confute, muzzle, halter, or button up the mouths of vain and wicked men, who say unto the Lord, 'Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?' Job xxi. 14, 15. [The peculiar expression 'button up,' *i.e.* shut up, of this note, is another Shakesperean word; *e.g.* 'His heart is buttoned up,' Comedy of Errors, iv. 2.—G.]

have met with such heart-meltings, such heart-humblings, such heart-revivings, such heart-cheerings, as they have never met with before, in all their days.

Ah! say these souls, 'One day in his courts, is better than a thousand' years elsewhere, Ps. lxxxiv. 10. Oh we had rather with Moses lose all, and be whipped and stripped of all, than lose the sweet enjoyments of God in ordinances. Oh in them, God hath been light and life, a joy and a crown to our souls. God is tender of his own glory, and of his children's comfort; and therefore he gives them such choice aspects, and such sweet visits in ordinances, that they may have arguments at hand to stop the mouths of sinners, and to declare from their own experience, that all the ways of God are ways of pleasantness, and that all his paths drop fatness, Prov. iii. 17, Ps. lxv. 11. And thus much for the reasons, why God lifts up the light of his countenance upon his people in ordinances. Before I pass to the next particular, it will be necessary that I lay down these cautions, to prevent weak saints from stumbling and doubting, who have not yet found the Lord giving out his favours, and making known his grace and love, in such a sensible way to their souls, in breaking the bread of life, as others have found.

(1.) *The first caution.* Now, the first caution I shall lay down is this, *That even believers may sometimes come and go from this ordinance, without that comfort, that assurance, that joy, that refreshment that others have, and may meet with.* And this may arise, partly from their unpreparedness and unfitness to meet with God in the ordinance, 2 Chron. xxx. 19, 20, 1 Cor. xi. 20–34; and partly from their playing and dallying with some bosom sin; or else it may arise from their not stirring up themselves to lay hold on God, as the prophet Isaiah complains, 'There is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee,' Isa. lxiv. 7; or else it may arise from the Spirit's standing at a distance from the soul. It may be, O soul, that thou hast set the Comforter, the Spirit a-mourning; and therefore it is, that he refuses to comfort thee, and to be a sealing and witnessing Spirit unto thee. Thou hast grieved him with thy sins, and he will now vex thee by his silence; thou hast thrown the cordials against the wall; thou hast trampled his manna under thy feet; and therefore it is that he hath veiled his face, and changed his countenance and carriage towards thee; thou hast been unkind to the Spirit; and therefore he carries it towards thee as an enemy, and not as a friend, Ps. lxxvii. 2, Gen. xxxi. 5.

(2.) *The second caution* is this, *That though God doth in this ordinance withhold comfort and assurance from thee, yet thou must hold on in the duty, thou must wait at hope's hospital.* At this heavenly pool, thou must lie till the angel of the covenant, the Lord Jesus, comes and breathes upon thee; at these waters of the sanctuary thou must lie, till the Spirit moves upon thy soul; thou must not neglect thy work, though God delays thy comfort; thou must be as obedient in the want of assurance, as thou art thankful under the enjoyment of assurance.[1] Laban often changed Jacob's wages, yet Jacob

[1] The longer mercy is a-coming, the greater, the sweeter, and the better usually it is when it comes. Many a child hath got a Benjamin's portion, a Hannah's portion, a

never changed nor neglected his work. Though God should change thy wages, thy comforts into discomforts, thy spring into an autumn, &c., yet thou must never change nor neglect thy work, which is obeying, believing, and waiting, till God, in his ordinances, shall lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and turn thy night into day, and thy mourning into rejoicing. God is the same, and the commands of the gospel are the same, and therefore thy work is the same, whether it be night or day with thy soul, whether thou art under frowns or smiles, in the arms or at the feet of God.

(3.) *The third caution* is this, *Many of the precious sons and daughters of Sion have had and may have so much comfort and sweetness, so much life and heat, so much reviving and quickening, so much marrow and fatness in this ordinance, as may clearly evidence the special presence of God with their spirits, and as they would not exchange for all the world, and yet would give a world, were it in their power, for those strong comforts and full assurance, that others enjoy in this ordinance.* In this ordinance, Christ looks upon one and kisses another; he gives a nod to one, and his hand to another. Some in this ordinance shall have but sips of mercy, others shall have large draughts of mercy; some in this ordinance shall see but the back-parts of Christ, others shall see him face to face, Lam. i. 16; to one he gives silver, to another he gives gold; to one he gives but a glass of consolation, to another he gives flagons of consolation, Cant. ii. 5; some shall have but drops, others shall swim in the ocean; some shall have a large harvest, others shall have but a few gleanings, and yet they, if rightly valued, are more worth than a world.[1] The Sun of righteousness is a free agent, and he will work and shine forth as he pleases, and on whom he pleases; and who art thou that darest say to Christ, Why doest thou so?[2] Ah! Christians, you may not, you must not say, We have not met with Christ in the sacrament, because we have not met with joy and assurance in the sacrament; for you may enjoy very much of Christ in that ordinance, and yet not so much as may boil up to full assurance, and make you go away singing, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his,' Cant. ii. 16. We may enjoy the warmth and heat of the sun, when we cannot see the sun; so souls may enjoy much of Christ, by holy influences, in the sacrament, when they cannot see Christ in the sacrament.

VI. *Sixthly, Times of personal afflictions are times wherein the Lord is graciously pleased to vouchsafe to his people sweet manifestations of his love and favour.* When his hand is heavy on them, then he lifts up the light of his countenance upon them: Ps. lxxi. 20, 21, 'Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shall quicken me again; and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.' So Ps. xciv. 19, 'In the multitude of my careful troubled thoughts, thy

double portion, by waiting; so hath many a saint got a worthy portion, a double portion of comfort and assurance by waiting. *Ergo*, wait patiently, and work heartily.

[1] King Cyrus gave a kiss to Chrysantes, and a golden cup to Artabazus. [Chrysantas, *not* Chrysantes, stood very high in the favour of Cyrus: Cyropædeia *throughout*. Artabazus. Cf. *Cyrop*, i. 4, sec. 27; iv. 1, sec. 23, &c., &c.—G.]

[2] The least star gives light, the least drop moistens, the least pearl sparkles, and the least dram of special grace saves.

comforts delight my soul.'[1] Ah, Christians! hath not God by all afflictions lifted up your souls nearer heaven, as Noah's ark was lifted up nearer and nearer heaven by the rising of the waters higher and higher? The ball in the emblem says *Percussa surgo*, the harder you beat me down in afflictions, the higher I shall bound in affection towards heaven and heavenly things; so afflictions do but elevate and raise a saint's affections to heaven and heavenly things.

When Munster lay sick, and his friends asked him how he did and how he felt himself, he pointed to his sores and ulcers, whereof he was full, and said, 'These are God's gems and jewels, wherewith he decketh his best friends; and to me they are more precious than all the gold and silver in the world.'

Afflictiones benedictiones, afflictions are blessings. God's corrections are our instructions, his lashes our lessons, his scourges our schoolmasters, his chastisements our advertisements.[2] And to note this, the Hebrews and Greeks both do express chastening and teaching by one and the same word (מוסר *παιδεία*, *musar*, *paideia*), because the latter is the true end of the former. Ah, you afflicted sons and daughters of Zion, have you not had such sweet discoveries of God, such sensible demonstrations of his love, such bowels of affections working in him towards you? Have you not had such gracious visits, and such glorious visions, that you would not exchange for all the world? Yes. Have you not had the precious presence of God with you, quieting and stilling your souls, supporting and upholding your souls, cheering and refreshing your souls? Yes. And have you not had the Lord applying precious promises, and suitable remedies, to all your maladies? Have you not found God a-bringing in unexpected mercy in the day of your adversity, suitable to that promise, Hosea ii. 14, 'I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her' (or, I will speak earnestly to her heart, as the Hebrew reads it[3])? Yes. Have you not found that God hath so sweetened and sanctified afflictions to you, as to make them a means to discover many sins that lay hid, and to purge you from many sins that cleaved close unto you, and to prevent you from falling into many sins that would have been the breaking of your bones, and the loss of your comfort? Yes.[4] Have you not found that you have been like the walnut tree, the better for beating; and like the vine, the better for bleeding; and like the ingenuous child, the better for whipping? Yes.[5] Have you not found afflictions to revive, quicken, and recover your decayed graces? Have they not inflamed that love that hath been cold, and put life into that faith that hath been dying, and quickened those hopes that have been withering, and put spirit into

[1] שרעפי, my cogitations, *i.e.* my careful, troubled thoughts, perplexed as the branches of a tree by a strong wind. It comes from סעיף, *a branch*, by interposing ר.

[2] *Qui non est crucianus, non est Christianus*, saith Luther. The proverb is, Smart makes wit, and vexation gives understanding. I bless God I know several precious souls of whom this world is not worthy, that have found more of God in afflictions than in any other gracious dispensation. Manasseh got more by his iron chain than ever he got by his golden crown.

[3] ודברתי על-לבה.

[4] *Oculos quos peccatum claudit pœna aperit. Perissem nisi periissem*, I had perished, if I had not perished.

[5] Musk, saith one, when it hath lost its sweetness, if it be put into the sink amongst filth, it recovers it. So doth afflictions recover and revive decayed graces.

those joys and comforts that have been languishing? Yes. Oh, then, stand up and declare to all the world that times of affliction have been the times wherein you have seen the face of God, and heard the voice of God, and sucked sweetness from the breasts of God, and fed upon the delicates of God, and drunk deep of the consolations of God, and have been most satisfied and delighted with the presence and in-comes of God.

When Hezekiah in his greatest affliction lamentingly said, Isa. xxxviii. 9–20, 'I shall go mourning to my grave, I shall not see the Lord in the land of the living. He will cut me off with pining sickness, he will break all my bones. Like a crane, or a swallow, so did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove; mine eyes fail with looking upward. O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me.' So now God comes in a way of mercy to him, and prints his love upon his heart: ver. 17, 'Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption;' or rather, as the Hebrew reads it, חשחת נפשי, 'Thou hast loved my soul from the grave, for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.' Ah, says Hezekiah, I have now found that in my afflictions thy affections have been most strongly carried towards me, as towards one whom thou art exceedingly taken with. Oh, now thou hast warmed me with thy love, and visited me with thy grace; thou hast made my darkness to be light, and turned my sighing into singing, and my mourning into rejoicing. So when Habakkuk's belly trembled, and his lips quivered, and rottenness entered into his bones, and all creature comforts failed, yet then had he such a sweet presence of God with his spirit, as makes him to rejoice in the midst of sorrows: 'Yet,' says he, 'I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation,' chap. iii. 16–18. And thus you see it clear, that in times of affliction God makes sweet manifestations of his love and favour to his children's souls.

VII. *Seventhly, Praying times are times wherein the Lord is graciously pleased to give his people some sweet and comfortable assurance of his love and favour towards them.* Prayer crowns God with honour and glory that is due to his name; and God crowns prayer with assurance and comfort. Usually the most praying souls are the most assured souls. There is no service wherein souls have such a near, familiar, and friendly intercourse with God, as in this of prayer; neither is there any service wherein God doth more delight to make known his grace and goodness, his mercy and bounty, his beauty and glory, to poor souls, than this of prayer.[1] The best and the sweetest flowers of paradise, God gives to his people when they are upon their knees. Prayer is *porta cœli, clavis paradisi*, the gate of heaven, a key to let us into paradise. When John was weeping, in prayer doubtless, the sealed book was open to him. Many Christians have found by experience, praying times to be sealing times, times wherein God hath sealed up to them the remission of their sins, and the salvation of their souls. They have found prayer to be a shelter to their souls, a sacrifice to God, a sweet savour to Christ, a scourge to Satan, and an inlet to assurance. God loves to lade the wings of prayer with the choicest and chiefest

[1] *Nunquam abs te absque te recedo.*—Bernard, Epist. 116. O Lord, saith he, I never go away from thee without thee. He was a man very much in prayer, as some writers observe.

blessings. Ah! how often, Christians! hath God kissed you at the beginning of prayer, and spoke peace to you in the midst of prayer, and filled you with joy and assurance, upon the close of prayer! That ninth of Daniel, from the seventeenth to the four and twentieth verse, is full to the point in hand; I shall only cite the words of the four last verses: Dan. ix. 20–23, 'And whilst I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, whilst I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly,[1] touched me about the time of evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications, the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee, for thou art greatly beloved; therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.' In these words you see, whilst Daniel was in prayer, the Lord appears to him and gives him a divine touch, and tells him that he is 'a man greatly beloved,' or as the Hebrew hath it, 'a man of desires.'[2] So Acts x. 1–4. 'There was a certain man in Cæsarea, called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house; which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always; he saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.'[3] Praying Cornelius, you see, is remembered by God, and visited sensibly and evidently by an angel, and assured that his prayers and good deeds are not only an odour, a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing to God, but also that they shall be gloriously rewarded by God. So when Peter was praying, he fell into a trance, and saw heaven opened, and had his mind elevated, and all the faculties of his soul filled with a divine revelation, Acts x. 9–16; so when Paul was a-praying, he sees a vision, Acts ix. 11–16, Ananias a-coming and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight. Paul had not been long at prayer before it was revealed to him, that he was a chosen vessel, before he was filled with the voice and comforts of the Holy Ghost; so our Saviour was transfigured as he was praying, Mat. xvii. 1, 2. Thus you see, that praying times are times wherein the Lord is graciously pleased to lift up the light of his countenance upon his people, and to cause his grace and favour, his goodness and kindness, to rest on them, as the spirit of Elijah did rest on Elisha, 2 Kings ii. 15.

Obj. But some may object and say, We have been at the door of mercy, early and late, for assurance, and yet we have not obtained it; we have prayed and waited, and we have waited and prayed, we have prayed and mourned, and we have mourned and prayed, and yet we cannot get a good word from God, a smile from God; he hath covered

[1] מעף ביעף, with weariness or flight, tired as it were with his making speed.
[2] חמודות, Chamudoth, a man of desires, that is, one that is very pleasing and delightful to God.
[3] *Vide* Calvin and Œcumenius on the words.

himself with a cloud, and after all that we have done, it is still night with our souls; God seems not to be at home, he seems not to value our prayers; we call, and cry and shout out for assurance, and yet he shutteth out our prayer; we are sure that we have not found praying times to be times of assurance to our souls, &c., Lam. iii. 8.

Ans. 1. Now to this objection I shall give these answers:

(1.) *First*, That it may be you have been more earnest and vehement for assurance, and the effects of it, viz., joy, comfort, and peace, than you have been for grace and holiness, for communion with God, and conformity to God.[1] It may be your requests for assurance have been full of life and spirits, when your requests for grace and holiness, for communion with God, and conformity to God, have been lifeless and spiritless. If so, no wonder that assurance is denied you. Assurance makes most for your comfort, but holiness makes most for God's honour. Man's holiness is now his greatest happiness, and in heaven man's greatest happiness will be his perfect holiness. Assurance is the daughter of holiness; and he that shall more highly prize, and more earnestly press after the enjoyment of the daughter than the mother, it is not a wonder if God shuts the door upon him, and crosses him in the thing he most desires. The surest and the shortest way to assurance is to wrestle and contend with God for holiness, as the angel contended with the devil about the body of Moses, Jude 9. When the stream and cream of a man's spirit runs after holiness, it will not be long night with that man; the Sun of righteousness will shine forth upon that man, and turn his winter into summer, and crown him with the diadem of assurance, Mal. iv. 2. The more holy any person is, the more excellent he is. All corruptions are diminutions of excellency. The more mixed anything is, the more it is abased, as if gold and tin be mixed; and the more pure it is as mere gold, the more glorious it is.[2] Now the more divinely excellent any man is, the more fit he is to enjoy the choicest and highest favours. Assurance is a jewel of that value, that he will bestow it upon none but his excellent ones, Ps. xvi. 3. Assurance is that tried gold, that none can wear but those that win it in a way of grace and holiness, Rev. iii. 18. It may be, if thou hadst minded, and endeavoured more after communion with God, and conformity to God, thou mightest before this time have looked upward, and seen God in Christ smiling upon thee, and have looked inward into thy own soul, and seen the Spirit of grace witnessing to thy spirit that thou wert a son, an heir, an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ, Rom. viii. 15–17. But thou hast minded more thy own comfort than Christ's honour; thou hast minded the blossoms and the fruit, assurance and peace, more than Christ the root; thou hast minded the springs of comfort, more than Christ, the fountain of life; thou hast minded the beams of the sun, more than the Sun of righteousness; and therefore it is but a righteous thing with God to leave thee to walk in a valley of darkness, to hide his face from thee, and to seem to be as an enemy to thee.

Ans. 2. But secondly, I answer, *It may be thou art not yet fit for so*

[1] It is better to ask and not receive, than to receive and not ask.—*Clement.*

[2] The Jews have a saying, that those seventy souls that went down to Egypt were more worth than the seventy nations of the world.

choice a mercy, thou art not able to bear so great a favour. Many heads are not able to bear strong waters. Why, the very quintessence of all the strong consolations of God are wrung out into this golden cup of assurance; and can you drink of this cup, and not stammer nor stagger? Believe it, assurance is meat for strong men; few babes, if any, are able to bear it, and digest it.[1] The apostle saith, Heb. v. 12, 14, that 'strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age' (or that are comparatively perfect, or full-grown), 'even those who, by reason of use' (Greek, by reason of habit, which is got by continual custom and long practice[2]), 'have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.' The Greek word properly signifies such an exercise as wrestlers, or such as contend for victory, do use, which is with all their might and strength, being trained up unto it by long exercise. It may be, O complaining Christian, that thou art but a scrub,[3] a babe in grace, 1 Cor. iii. 1–3; happily thou art not yet got beyond the breast, or, if thou art, yet thou art not past the spoon. Ah! Christian, if it be thus with thee, cease complaining of want of assurance, and be up and growing; be more aged in grace and holiness, and thou shalt find assurance growing upon thee.[4] Divine wisdom sparkles much in this, in giving milk to babes that are more carnal than spiritual, and meat, *i.e.* assurance, to strong men, that have more skill and will, that have a greater ability and choicer faculty to prize and improve this jewel assurance than babes have. The Hebrew word *chabodh* signifies both weight and glory[5]; and verily, glory is such a weight, that if the body were not upheld by that glorious power that raised Jesus Christ from the grave, if it were not bore up by everlasting arms, it were impossible it should bear it, Deut. xxxiii. 27. Now assurance is the top of glory, it is the glory of glory. Then certainly they had need be very glorious within that shall be crowned with such a weight of glory as assurance is, Ps. xlv. 13. Well! remember this, it is mercy to want mercy till we are fit for mercy, till we are able to bear the weight of mercy, and make a divine improvement of mercy.

Ans. 3. Thirdly, *You must distinguish between delays and denials.*[6] God may delay us, when he does not deny us; he may defer the giving in of a mercy, and yet, at last, give the very mercy begged. Barren Hannah prays, year after year, for a mercy. God delays her long, but at last gives her her desire; and the text says expressly, that her countenance was no more sad, 1 Sam. i. 18. After many prayers and tears, the Lord comes in, and assures her, that she should have the desire of her soul; and now she mourns no more, but sits down satisfied, comforted, and cheered. After much praying, waiting, and weeping, God usually comes with his hands and heart full of mercy to his people. He loves not to come *vacuis manibus,* empty-handed, to those that have sat long with wet eyes at mercy's door. Christ tries the faith, patience, and constancy of the Canaanite woman, Mat. xv. 21–29; he deferred and delayed her, he reproached and repulsed her; and yet at last is

[1] Job xv. 11. Divine comfort is a delicate thing, and it not given to him that admits of any other.

[2] τελείων . . . διὰ τὴν ἕξιν τὰ αἰσθητήρια γεγυμνασμένα.

[3] 'A mean fellow.'—G.

[4] *Invalidum omne natura querulum.*—Seneca. Weak spirits are ever quarrelling and contending.

[5] כבוד. So the Chaldee יקר.

[6] Every audience increaseth love, thanks, and trust, Ps. cxvi. 1–3. And those mercies are best improved, which we receive after we have been long upon our knees.

overcome by her, as not being able any longer to withstand her importunate requests. 'O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee, even as thou wilt.'[1] Christ puts her off at first, but closes with her at last; at first a good word, a good look is too good for her, but at last good words and good looks are too little for her: 'Be it unto thee, even as thou wilt.' At first Christ carries himself to her as a churlish stranger, but at last as an amorous lover. Though at first he had not an ear to hear her, yet at last he had a heart to grant her, not only her desires, but even what else she would desire over and above what she had desired. God heard Daniel at the beginning of his supplications, and his bowels of love was working strongly towards him, but the angel Gabriel doth not inform Daniel of this till afterwards, Dan. ix. 15–25. Praying souls, you say that you have prayed long for assurance, and yet you have not obtained it. Well, pray still. Oh pray and wait, wait and pray; 'the vision is for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry,' Hab. ii. 3. God hath never, God will never, fail the praying soul; at the long run, thou shalt be sure to obtain that assurance that will richly recompense thee for all thy praying, waiting, and weeping; therefore hold up and hold on praying, though God doth delay thee, and my soul for thine, thou shalt reap in due season such a harvest of joy and comfort, as will sufficiently pay thee for all thy pains, Gal. vi. 9. Shall the husbandman wait patiently for the precious fruits of the earth, James v. 7; and wilt not thou wait patiently for assurance, which is a jewel more worth than heaven and earth? Praying souls, remember this. It is but weakness to think that men shall reap as soon as they sow, that they shall reap in the evening when they have but sowed in the morning. Titus Vespasian never dismissed any petitioner with a tear in his eye, or with a heavy heart;[2] and shall we think that the God of compassions will always dismiss the petitioners of heaven with tears in their eyes? Surely no.[3]

VIII. *Eighthly, Sometimes before the soul is deeply engaged in sore conflicts with Satan, the Lord is graciously pleased to visit his people with his loving-kindness, and to give them some sweet assurance, that though they are tempted, yet they shall not be worsted; though they are tried, yet they shall be crowned,* 1 John x. 28; *though Satan doth roar as a lion upon the soul, yet he shall not make a prey of the soul; for the Lion of the tribe of Judah will hold it fast, and none shall pluck it out of his hand,* Rev. v. 5. God first fed Israel with manna from heaven, and gave them water to drink out of the rock, before their sore fight with Amalek, Exod. xvii. 8, &c. Before Paul was buffeted by Satan, he was caught up into the third heaven, where he had very glorious visions and revelations of the Lord, even such as he was not able to utter, 2 Cor. xii. 1–8. Before Jesus Christ was led into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan, to question and doubt of his Sonship, he heard a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' Mat. iii. 17. The Spirit of the Lord did first descend upon him as a dove, before Satan fell upon him as a lion. God walks with

[1] *Exclamat tanquam victus*, he cries out as conquered.—*Burgensis.*
[2] Suetonius. [3] This truth many choice Christians have found by experience.

his people some turns in paradise, and gives them some tastes of his right-hand pleasures, before Satan, by his tempting, shall do them a displeasure, Ps. xvi. 11. But I must hasten to a close of this chapter; and therefore,

IX. *Ninthly, and lastly, After some sharp conflicts with Satan, God is graciously pleased to lift up the light of his countenance upon his people, and to warm and cheer their hearts with the beams of his love,*:[1] Mat. iv. 11, 'Then the devil leaveth him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.' When Christ had even spent himself in foiling and quelling, in resisting and scattering Satan's temptations, then the angels come and minister cordials and comforts unto him. So after Paul had been buffeted by Satan, he heard that sweet word from heaven, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness,' 2 Cor. xii. 7–10, which filled his heart with joy and gladness. The hidden manna, the new name, and the white stone, is given to the conqueror, Rev. vii. 17; to him that hath fought 'with principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places,' Eph. vi. 12, and is come off with his garments dipped in blood. After the Roman generals had gotten victory over their enemies, the senate did use not one way, but many ways, to express their loves to them. So after our faith hath gotten victory over Satan, God usually takes the soul in his arms, and courts it, and shews much kindness to it. Now the soul shall be carried in triumph, now the chariot of state attends the soul, now white raiment is put upon the soul, Rev. iii. 5, and vii. 9; now palms are put into the conqueror's hands, now the garland is set upon the conqueror's head, and now a royal feast is provided, where God will set the conqueror at the upper end of the table, and speak kindly, and carry it sweetly towards him, as one much affected and taken with his victory over the prince of darkness. Conflicts with Satan are usually the sharpest and the hottest; they spend and waste most the vital and noble spirits of the saints; and therefore the Lord, after such conflicts, doth ordinarily give his people his choicest and his strongest cordials.[2]

And thus, by divine assistance, we have shewed you the special times and seasons wherein the Lord is graciously pleased to give his people some tastes of his love, some sweet assurance, that they are his favourites, that all is well, and shall be for ever well between him and them; and that, though many things may trouble them, yet nothing shall separate them from their God, their Christ, their crown.

CHAPTER III.

Containing the several hindrances and impediments that keep poor souls from assurance; with the means and helps to remove those impediments and hindrances.

(1.) *The first impediment.* Now the first impediment and hindrance to assurance that we shall instance in, is, *Despairing thoughts of mercy.* Oh! these imprison the soul, and make it always dark with the soul;

[1] *Non tanquam misericordes indigenti, sed tanquam subjecti omnipotenti.*—Augustine, Hom. viii.

[2] As many have found by experience.

these shut the windows of the soul, that no light can come in to cheer it. Despairing thoughts make a man fight against God with his own weapons; they make a man cast all the cordials of the Spirit against the wall, as things of no value; they make a man suck poison out of the sweetest promises; they make a man eminent in nothing unless it be in having hard thoughts of God, and in arguing against his own soul and happiness, and in turning his greatest advantages into disadvantages, his greatest helps into his greatest hindrances.[1] Despairing thoughts of mercy make a man below the beast that perisheth. Pliny speaks of the scorpion, that there is not one minute wherein it doth not put forth the sting, as being unwilling to lose any opportunity of doing mischief.[2] Such scorpions are despairing souls, they are still a-putting out their stings, a-wrangling with God, or Christ, or the Scripture, or the saints, or ordinances, or their own souls. A despairing soul is *Magormissabib*, a terror to himself; it cannot rest, but, like Noah's ark, is always tossed here and there; it is troubled on every side, it is full of fears and fightings.[3] A despairing soul is a burden to others, but the greatest burden to itself. It is still a-vexing, terrifying, tormenting, condemning, and perplexing itself. Despair makes every sweet bitter, and every bitter exceeding bitter; it puts gall and wormwood into the sweetest wine, and it puts a sting, a cross, into every cross.[4] Now whilst the soul is under these despairing thoughts of mercy, how is it possible that it should attain to a well grounded assurance. Therefore for the helping of the soul out of this despairing condition, give me leave a little to expostulate with despairing souls. Tell me, O despairing souls, is not despair an exceeding vile and contemptible sin? Is it not a dishonour to God, a reproach to Christ, and a murderer of souls? Is it not a belying of God, a denying of Christ, and a crowning of Satan? It doth without doubt proclaim the devil a conqueror, and lifts him up above Christ himself.[5] Despair is an evil that flows from the greatest evil in the world; it flows from unbelief, from ignorance, and misapprehensions of God and his grace, and from mistakes of Scripture, and from Satan, who, being for ever cast out of paradise, labours with all his art and might to work poor souls to despair of ever entering into paradise. O despairing souls, let the greatness of this sin effectually awaken you, and provoke you to labour as for life, to come out of this condition, which is as sinful as it is doleful, and as much to be hated as [to] be lamented.

Again, tell me, O despairing souls, hath not despairing Judas perished, whenas the murderers of Christ, believing on him, were saved? Did not Judas sin more heinously by despairing than by betraying of Christ?[6] Despairing Spira is damned, when repenting Manasseh is saved. O despairing souls, the arms of mercy are open to receive a

[1] There is a threefold despair: 1, worldly; 2, moral; 3, spiritual. And this last is the worst and greatest.

[2] Nat. Hist. lib. xi. cap. 30 (25).—G.

[3] It makes a man call good evil, and evil good; light darkness, and darkness light; sweet bitter, and bitter sweet; a Saviour a destroyer, a Redeemer a revenger, &c. [Cf. Isa. v. 20, &c.—G.]

[4] A despairing soul is like the spider, that draws poison out of the sweetest flowers.

[5] Despair is Satan's master-piece; it carries men headlong to hell; it makes a man twice-told a child of hell; it is a viper that hath stinged many a man to death.

[6] *Plus peccavit Judas desperando quam prodendo Christum*, saith one.

Manasseh, a monster, a devil incarnate; he caused that gospel prophet Isaiah to be sawed in the midst with a saw, as some rabbins say; he turned aside from the Lord to commit idolatry, and caused his sons to pass through the fire, and dealt with familiar spirits, and made the streets of Jerusalem to overflow with innocent blood, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 1–15. The soul of Mary Magdalene was full of devils; and yet Christ casts them out, and made her heart his house, his presence chamber, Luke vii. 47. Why dost thou then say there is no hope for thee, O despairing soul? Paul was full of rage against Christ and his people, and full of blasphemy and impiety, and yet behold, Paul is a chosen vessel, Paul is caught up into the heaven, and he is filled with the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, Acts viii. 1, 2; ix. 1; xxvi. 11; 1 Tim. i. 13, 15, 16. Why shouldst thou then say there is for thee no help, O despairing soul! Though the prodigal had run from his father, and spent and wasted all his estate in ways of baseness and wickedness, yet upon his resolution to return, his father meets him, and instead of killing him, he kisses; instead of kicking him, he embraces him; instead of shutting the door upon him, he makes sumptuous provision for him, Luke xv. 13–23. And how then dost thou dare to say, O despairing soul, that God will never cast an eye of love upon thee, nor bestow a crumb of mercy on thee! The apostle tells you of some monstrous miscreants that were unrighteous, fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners; and yet these monsters of mankind, through the infinite goodness and free grace of God, are washed from the filth and guilt of their sins, and justified by the righteousness of Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, and decked and adorned with the precious graces of Christ, 1 Cor. vi. 9–11. Therefore do not say, O despairing soul, that thou shalt die in thy sins, and lie down at last in everlasting sorrow.[1] Did it make for the honour and glory of his free grace to pardon them, and will it be a reproach to his free grace to pardon thee? Could God be just in justifying such ungodly ones, and shall he be unjust in justifying of thee? Did not their unworthiness and unfitness for mercy turn the stream of mercy from them? No. Why then, O despairing soul, shouldst thou fear that thy unworthiness and unfitness for mercy will so stop and turn the stream of mercy, as that thou must perish eternally for want of one drop of special grace and mercy?

Again, tell me, O despairing soul, is not the grace of God free grace, is not man's salvation of free grace?[2] 'By grace ye are saved,' Ephes. ii. 8. Every link of this golden chain is grace. It is free grace that chose us, Rom. xi. 5. Even so then at this present time also there is 'a remnant according to the election of grace.' It is free grace that chooses some to be jewels from all eternity, that chooses some to life, when others are left in darkness.

The Lord Jesus Christ is a gift of free grace. Christ is the greatest, the sweetest, the choicest, the chiefest gift that ever God gave; and yet

[1] O despairing souls, are you good at burning, that you have no mercy on yourselves, but to argue to your own undoing?

[2] *Sub laudibus naturæ latent inimici gratiæ.*—Augustine. The patrons of man's free will are enemies to God's free grace.

this gift is given by a hand of love. 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,' &c., John iii. 16; Isa. ix. 6; John iv. 10. Here is a *sic* without a *sicut*, 'God *so* loved the world;' so freely, so vehemently, so fully, so admirably, so unconceivably, 'That he gave his only Son.' His Son, not his servant, his begotten Son, not his adopted Son, yea, his only begotten Son.

I have read of one that had four sons; and in a famine, sore oppressed with hunger, the parents resolved to sell one for relief; but then they considered with themselves which of the four they should sell. They said the eldest was the first of their strength, therefore loath were they to sell him The second was the picture of their father, and therefore loath were they to part with him. The third was like the mother, and therefore they were not willing to part with him. The fourth, and youngest, was the child of their old age, their Benjamin, the dearly beloved of them both; and therefore they were resolved not to part with any of them, and so would rather suffer themselves to perish than to part with any of their children.[1]

Oh! but God's heart is so strongly set upon sinners, that he freely gives Jesus Christ, who is his first-born, who is his very picture, who is his beloved Benjamin, who is his chiefest joy, who is his greatest delight. As Solomon speaks: Prox. viii. 30, 'Then I was by him as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight' (in the Hebrew שעשועים, 'his delights,' that is, his greatest delight), 'rejoicing always before him,' or sporting greatly before him, as little ones do before their parents. Why, then, O despairing soul! doest thou sit down sighing, and walk up and down mourning, and sadly concluding that there is no mercy for thee? Hold up thy head, O despairing soul! Jesus Christ himself is a gift of free grace. The consideration of his free, boundless, bottomless, and endless love, may afford thee much matter of admiration and consolation, but none of desperation.[2]

And as Jesus Christ is a gift of free grace, or a free-grace gift, so the precious covenant of grace is a gift of grace: Gen. xvii. 2, 'I will make my covenant betwixt me and thee;' but in the original it is, 'I will give thee my covenant,' ואתנה בריתי. Here you see that the covenant of grace is a free gift of grace.

God gave the covenant of the priesthood unto Phinehas as a gift, Num. xxv. 12; so God gives the covenant of grace as a gift of favour and grace to all that he takes unto covenant with himself. From first to last all is from free grace. God loves freely: 'I will heal their backsliding; I will love them freely,' &c., Hosea xiv. 4.

So Moses: 'The Lord,' saith he, 'set his love upon you to take you into covenant with him: not because you were more in number than other people, but because he loved you, and chose your fathers,' Deut. vii. 7, 8.

The only ground of God's love is his love. The ground of God's love is only and wholly in himself. There is neither portion nor proportion in us to draw his love. There is no love nor loveliness in us that should

[1] But God, O thou despairing soul, is *pater miserationum*, he is all bowels, he will not stand upon giving his most lovely Son to most unlovely souls.

[2] Christ is called the gift of God, and the free gift of God, five times together in Rom. v. 15–18.

cause a beam of his love to shine upon us. There is that enmity, that filthiness, that treacherousness, that unfaithfulness, to be found in every man's bosom, as might justly put God upon glorifying himself in their eternal ruin, and to write their names in his black book in characters of blood and wrath.[1] And as God loves freely, so God justifies us freely: Rom. iii. 24, 'Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.' And as poor sinners are justified freely, so they are pardoned freely: Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted,' speaking of Christ, 'with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.' And as they are pardoned freely, so they shall be saved freely: Rom. vi. 23. 'For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life,' &c.[2] Thus you see, O despairing souls! that all is of free grace; from the lowest to the highest round of Jacob's ladder all is of grace. Christ is a donative, the covenant of grace is a donative, pardon of sin is a donative, heaven and salvation is a donative. Why, then, O despairing souls! should you sit down sighing under such black, sad, and dismal apprehensions of God, and your own state and condition?

Verily, seeing all happiness and blessedness comes in a way of free grace, and not in a way of doing, not in a way of works, you should arise, O despairing souls! and cast off all despairing thoughts, and drink of the waters of life freely, Rev. xxi. 6, xxii. 18. What though thy heart be dead, and hard, and sad; what though thy sins be many, and thy fears great; yet behold here is glorious grace, rich grace, wondrous grace, matchless and incomparable riches of free grace spread before thee. Oh! let this fire warm thee, let these waters refresh thee, let these cordials strengthen thee, that it may be day and no longer night with thee, that thy mourning may be turned into rejoicing, and that thy beautiful garments may be put on, that so the rest of thy days may be days of gladness and sweetness, and free grace may be an everlasting shade, shelter, and rest unto thee, Isa. lii. 1.

Again, tell me, O despairing souls! do you understand, and most seriously and frequently ponder upon those particular scriptures that do most clearly, sweetly, and fully discover the mercies of God, the bowels of God, the grace and favour of God to poor sinners, as that Ps. lxxxvi. 5, 'For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy, unto all them that call upon thee'? God's mercies are above all his works, and above all ours too. His mercy is without measures and rules. All the acts and attributes of God sit at the feet of mercy. The weapons of God's artillery are turned into the rainbow; a bow, indeed, but without an arrow, bent but without a string. The rainbow is an emblem of mercy; it is a sign of grace and favour, and an assurance that God will remember his covenant. It is fresh and green, to note to us that God's mercy and grace to poor sinners is always fresh and green.[3]

Again, tell me, O despairing souls! have you seriously pondered upon

[1] God will have all blessings and happiness to flow from free grace: (1.) that the worst of sinners may have strong grounds for hope and comfort; (2.) for the praise of his own glory; (3.) that vain man may not boast; (4.) that our mercies and blessings may be sure to us.

[2] χαρισμα του θεου, the gracious gift of God. *Charisma* signifies a gift flowing from the free grace and favour of God, John x. 28.

[3] The rainbow is *signum gratiæ et fœderis.*

Neh. ix. 16, 17, 'But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments, and refused to obey; neither were mindful of the wonders that thou didst among them, but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage. But thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not'? 'Thou art a God,' says he, 'ready to pardon,' or rather as it is in the original, 'And thou a God of pardons' [ואתה אלוה סליחות]. There is a very great emphasis in this Hebraism, 'a God of pardons.' It shews us that mercy is essential unto God, and that he is incomparable in forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. Here Nehemiah sets him forth as one made up all of pardoning grace and mercy. As a circle begins everywhere, but ends nowhere, so do the mercies of God, Micah vii. 18.

When Alexander did sit down before a city, he did use to set up a light, to give those within notice that if they came forth to him whilst the light lasted, they might have quarter; if otherwise, no mercy was to be expected. Oh! but such is the mercy and patience of God to sinners, that he sets up light after light, and waits year after year upon them. When they have done their worst against him, yet then he comes with his heart full of love, and his hands full of pardons, and makes a proclamation of grace, that if now at last they will accept of mercy, they shall have it, Luke xiii. 7, Jer. iii. 1–15. Why, then, O despairing soul! dost thou make thy life a hell by having such low and mean thoughts of God's mercy, and by measuring of the mercies and bowels of God by the narrow scantling[1] of thy weak and dark understanding?

Again, tell me, O despairing souls! have you seriously pondered upon those words in Isa. lv. 7–9: 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man' (or rather as it is in the original, 'the man of iniquity'[2]) 'his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon,' or as it is in the original, 'He will multiply to pardon.'[3] 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts'? Turn, O despairing souls! to these scriptures: Num. xiv. 19, 20; Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7; Micah vii. 18, 19; Isa. xxx. 18, 19; Ps. lxxviii. 34–40; ciii. 8–13; Jer. iii. 1–12; Luke xv. 20–24; 1 Tim. i. 13–17; and tell me whether you have seriously and frequently pondered upon them!

Oh! how can you look so much grace and so much love and favour, and such tender bowels of compassion, in the face, as appears in these scriptures, and yet rack and tear your precious souls with despairing thoughts!

Oh! there is so much grace and goodness, so much love and favour, so much mercy and glory, sparkling and shining through these scrip-

[1] 'Measurement' or portion; another Shakesperian word, '*Scantling* of good or bad,' Troilus and Cressida, i. 3.—G.

[2] ויאש און, *veish aven*; the man of iniquity, *i. e.* one that makes a trade of sin.

[3] כי־ירבה. He will multiply to pardon, or he will increase his pardon, as the sinner increases his sins.

tures, as may allay the strongest fears, and scatter the thickest darkness, and cheer up the saddest spirits, &c.

Again, tell me, O despairing souls, do you not do infinite wrong to the precious blood of the Lord Jesus? Three things are called precious in the Scripture: the blood of Christ is called 'precious blood,' 1 Peter i. 19; and faith is called 'precious faith,' 2 Peter i. 1; and the promises are called 'precious promises,' 2 Peter i. 4. Now, what a reproach is it to this precious blood, 'that speaks better things than the blood of Abel,' Heb. xii. 24, for you to faint and sink under the power of despair; what doth this speak out? Oh! doth it not proclaim to all the world that there is no such worth and virtue, no such power and efficacy in the blood of Christ, as indeed there is? Oh! how will you answer this to Christ in that day wherein his blood shall speak and plead, not only with the profane that have trodden it under their feet, but also with despairing souls that have undervalued the power, virtue, and merit of it? Heb. x. 29.[1] Hath not the blood of Jesus Christ washed away the sins of a world of notorious sinners, and is it not of virtue to wash away the sins of one sinner? Hath it had that power in it as to bring many thousands to glory already, and is there not so much virtue left in it as to bring thy soul to glory? 1 John i. 7–9. Hath it actually delivered such a multitude from wrath to come as cannot be numbered, and is the virtue of it so far spent as that it cannot reach to thy deliverance? Are there not yet millions of thousands that shall hereafter be actually saved and justified by this blood?[2] Why, then, shouldst thou despair of being justified and saved from wrath to come by the virtue and power of this precious blood? There were five monks that were studying what was the best means to mortify sin. One said, to meditate on death; the second, to meditate on judgment; the third, to meditate on the joys of heaven; the fourth, to meditate on the torments of hell; the fifth, to meditate on the blood and sufferings of Jesus Christ: and certainly, the last is the choicest and strongest motive of all to the mortifying of sin. O despairing souls, despairing souls! if ever you would cast off your despairing thoughts and get out of your present hell, then dwell much, muse much, and apply much this precious blood to your own souls. So shall 'sorrow and mourning flee away, and everlasting joy shall rest upon you,' and the Lord shall give you 'an everlasting name,' and be 'everlasting light and glory to you,' and 'you shall be no more called Forsaken;' for 'the Lord will rejoice over you,'[3] and be a well-spring of life unto you, and make his abode with you, and turn your sighing into singing, your trembling into rejoicing, and your prison into a paradise of pleasure; so that your souls shall be able to stand up and say, Oh, blessed be God for Jesus Christ; blessed be God for that precious blood that hath justified our persons, and quieted our consciences, and scattered our fears, and answered our doubts, and given us to triumph over sin, hell, and death. 'Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died,' Rom. viii. 33–38.

[1] *Una guttula plus valet quam cœlum et terra.*—Luther.

[2] *Sanguis Christi clavis cœli.* The blood of Christ is the key of heaven that hath let in millions, Rev. vii. 9, Isa. lxvi. 8. 'A nation shall be born in a day;' when the Jews shall be converted, a very glorious converting power shall accompany the means of salvation, that Christ may reign from sea to sea, &c.

[3] Isa. lv. 11, lvi. 5, lx. 19, 20, and lxii. 4, 5; John iv. 21, 23.

The apostle, upon the account of Christ's death, of Christ's blood, cries out, Victory, victory; he looks upon all his enemies and sings it sweetly out, 'Over all these we are more than conquerors,' or 'above conquerors.'[1]

O despairing souls, to all your former sins do not add this, of making light and slight of the blood of Christ. As there is no blood that saves souls like the blood of Christ, so there is no blood that sinks souls like the blood of Christ. A drop of this blood upon a man's head at last will make him miserable for ever; but a drop of it upon a man's heart at last will make him happy for ever. In the day of vengeance, the destroying angel will spare you if this blood be found upon the door-posts of your hearts, otherwise you are lost for ever, Exod. xii. 7.

Lastly, I can tell you, O despairing souls, that God hath brought some out of the very gulf of despair, out of the very belly of hell; and therefore thou mayest hope that thy sins, that are thy present burden, shall not be thy future ruin. Doth not Asaph resemble the despairing soul to the life? 'My soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God, and was troubled; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Thou holdest mine eyes waking; I am so troubled that I cannot speak.' 'Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? and will his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?' Ps. lxxvii. 2–9. Now, out of this gulf God delivers him: ver. 10, 'And I said, This is my infirmity;' or 'this maketh me sick,' as it is in the original, ואמר חלותי. Here Asaph checks himself for casting the cordials, the comforts of the Spirit against the wall, and for his having such hard, sad, and black thoughts of God. And in the thirteenth verse he speaks like one dropped out of heaven: 'Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?' Formerly, the thoughts of God troubled him and overwhelmed him; but now, at last, the thoughts of the greatness of God, and of his interest in God, is matter of admiration and consolation to him. So Haman sighs it out thus: 'My soul is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.' 'Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves.' 'Lord, why casteth thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me? I am afflicted, and ready to die from my youth up; while I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off,' Ps. lxxxviii. 3, 6, 7, 14–16.[2] And yet, for all this, Heman's state was good; his soul was safe and happy: he calls God in the same psalm 'the God of his salvation,' ver. 1. So Jonah, when he was in the belly of hell, concludes, 'that he was cast out of the sight of God,' Jonah ii. 4.[3] The sense of his sin, and of God's anger and wrath, was so eminent and transcendent upon him, that it even distracts him, and makes him speak like a despairing soul: 'I am cast out from the presence of the Lord;

[1] ὑπερνικῶμεν is *supervincimus*, we do over-overcome.

[2] All conclude that he was very holy, and his soul very happy, even while he was in this gulf of misery.

[3] גרש, *Garash* signifies to expulse and cast out, as Adam was expulsed out of paradise, Gen. iii. 24. It signifies an ignominious expulsion.

I am expulsed out of God's sight,' as Moses was expulsed out of Egypt. God hath cast me out as one in whom he can take no pleasure nor delight, as a husband doth a wife that hath been false and unfaithful to him; and yet God's heart and love is so set upon Jonah that he will save him by a miracle rather than he shall not be saved. Jonah was much in the heart of God, and God made his faith at last victorious. To these I shall add some other famous instances. In king James his time there was one Mistress Honiwood of Kent, an ancient and religious gentlewoman, who lived many years in much horror and terror of conscience, for want of assurance of the favour of God, and of her eternal well-being. She would very often cry out, 'She was damned, she was damned.' Several men of eminent piety and parts, left no means unattempted, whereby her doubts might be answered, her conscience pacified, and her soul satisfied and cheered; yet she being strongly under the power of despair, persisted in crying out, 'Oh! she was damned, she was damned.' When these gentlemen were about to depart, she called for a cup of wine for them, which being brought, she drank to one of them a glass of the wine, and as soon as she had done, in an extreme passion she threw the Venice glass against the ground, saying, 'As sure as this glass will break, so surely am I damned.' The glass rebounded from the ground without any harm, which one of the ministers suddenly caught in his hand, and said, 'Behold, a miracle from heaven to confute your unbelief, Oh! tempt God no more, tempt God no more.' Both the gentlewoman and all the company were mightily amazed at this strange accident, and all glorified God for what was done; and the gentlewoman, by the grace and mercy of God, was delivered out of her hell of despair, and was filled with much comfort and joy, and lived and died full of peace and assurance.[1]

Take another instance. There lived lately at Tilbury, in Essex, a gentleman who was a long time under such an eminent degree of despair, that he rejected all comfort that was tendered to him by any hand, and would not suffer any to pray with him; nay, he sent to the ministers and Christians that lived near him, and desired them, that as they would not increase his torments in hell, they would cease praying for him. He would not suffer any religious service to be performed in his family, though formerly himself was much in the use of them; yet God gave him at last such inward refreshings, and by degrees filled him with such abundance of heavenly comforts, as he told all that came to him that it was impossible for any tongue to utter, or heart to imagine, that did not feel them. At last God gave him 'the new name, and the white stone, that none knows but he that hath it,' Rev. ii. 17. He lived about three quarters of a year, enjoying heaven upon earth, and then breathed out his last in the bosom of Christ.

Poor I, that am but of yesterday, have known some that have been so deeply plunged in the gulf of despair, that they would throw all the spiritual cordials that have been tendered to them against the walls. They were strong in reasoning against their own souls, and resolved against everything that might be a comfort and support unto them.

[1] The truth of this whole story is notoriously known. [Brooks quotes this also in his 'Ark for all God's Noahs,' but there spells the name Honywood. See Index, *sub nomine*. —G.]

They have been much set against all ordinances and religious services; they have cast off holy duties themselves, and peremptorily refused to join with others in them; yea, they have, out of a sense of sin and wrath, which hath lain hard upon them, refused the necessary comforts of this life, even to the overthrow of natural life. And yet out of this horrible pit, this hell upon earth, hath God delivered their souls, and given them such manifestations of his grace and favour, that they would not exchange them for a thousand worlds.

O despairing souls, despairing souls, you see that others, whose conditions have been as bad, if not worse than yours, have obtained mercy. God hath turned their hell into a heaven; he hath remembered them in their low estate; he hath pacified their raging consciences, and quieted their distracted souls; he hath wiped all tears from their eyes; and he hath been a well-spring of life unto their hearts. Therefore be not discouraged, O despairing souls, but look up to the mercy-seat; remember who is your rest, and kick no more, by despair, against the bowels of divine love.

(2.) *The second impediment* to assurance is, *men's entering into the lists of dispute with Satan about those things that are above their reach, as about the decrees and counsel of God.* Oh by this Satan keeps many precious souls off from assurance. Since God hath cast him out of paradise, and bound him in chains of darkness, he will make use of all his skill, power, and experience to draw men into the same misery with himself; and if he cannot prevent their entering at last into paradise above, he will labour might and main to make their life a wilderness here below;[1] and to this purpose he will busy their thoughts and hearts about the decrees of God, and about their particular elections; as, whether God hath decreed them to eternal happiness, or chosen them to everlasting blessedness, &c., that so by this means he may keep them from that desirable assurance that may yield believers two heavens, a heaven of joy and comfort here, and a heaven of felicity and glory hereafter.[2]

It is said of Marcellus, the Roman general, that he could not be quiet, *nec victor, nec victus*, neither conquered, nor conqueror. Such a one is Satan: if he be conquered by faith, yet he will be essaying; if he conquers, yet he will be roaring and triumphing. Satan's great design is eternally to ruin souls; and where he cannot do that, there he will endeavour to discomfit souls by busying them about the secret decrees and counsels of God. If the soul break through his temptations, as David's worthies did break through the hosts of the Philistines, 1 Sam. xxiii. 16, and snap his snares in sunder, as Samson did his cords, Judges xv. 13, 14, then his next shift is to engage them in such debates and disputes that neither men nor angels can certainly and infallibly determine, that so he may spoil their comforts when he cannot take away their crown.

Now thy wisdom and thy work, O doubting soul, lieth not in disputing, but in believing, praying, and waiting on God. No way to heaven,

[1] 2 Sam. xiv. 19, 'Is not the hand of Joab with thee in all this?' You know how to apply it.

[2] *Eorum quæ scire nec datur, nec fas est, docta est ignorantia; scientiae appetentia insaniæ species.*—Augustine.

no way to assurance, like this. Adam disputes with Satan, and falls, and loses paradise; Job believes, and resists Satan, and stands, and conquers upon the dunghill. When Satan, O trembling soul, would engage thee in disputes about this or that, say to him, 'Satan, revealed things belong to me,' but 'secret things belong to the Lord,' Deut. xxix. 29. It is dangerous to be curious in prying into hidden matters, and careless and negligent in observing known laws; say to him, Satan, thou hast been 'a liar and a murderer from the beginning,' John viii. 44; thou art a professed enemy to the saints' confidence and assurance, to their consolation and salvation. If thou hast anything to say, say it to my Christ; he is my comfort and crown, my joy and strength, my redeemer and intercessor, and he shall plead for me. Ah, Christians! if you would but leave disputing, and be much in believing and obeying, assurance would attend you; and you should 'lie down in peace, and take your rest, and none should make you afraid,' Job xi. 13–20.

(3.) *The third impediment* that keeps poor souls from assurance, is, *The want of a thorough search and examination of their own souls, and of what God hath done and is a-doing in them.*[1] Some there be that can read better in other men's books than in their own, and some there be that are more critical and curious in observing and studying other men's tempers, hearts, words, works, and ways, than their own. This is a sad evil, and causes many souls to sit down in darkness, even days without number. He that will not seriously and frequently observe the internal motions and actings of God, in and upon his noble part, his immortal soul, may talk of assurance, and complain of the want of assurance, but it will be long before he shall obtain assurance. O you staggering, wavering souls, you tossed and disquieted souls, know for a certain, that you will never come to experience the sweetness of assurance, till your eyes be turned inward, till you live more at home than abroad, till you dig and search for the mines that be in your own hearts, till you come to discern between a work of nature and a work of grace, till you come to put a difference between the precious and the vile, between God's work and Satan's work. When this is done, you will find the clouds to scatter, and the Sun of righteousness to shine upon you, and the day-star of assurance to rise in you. Doubting, trembling souls, do not deceive yourselves; it is not a careless, slight, slender searching into your own hearts, that will enable you to see the deep, the secret, the curious, the mysterious work of God upon you. If you do not 'seek as for silver,' and search for Christ and grace 'as for hid treasures,' you will not find them, Prov. ii. 3–5. Your richest metals lie lowest, your choicest gems are in the bowels of the earth, and they that will have them, must search diligently, and dig deep, or else they must go without them.[2] Doubting souls, you must search, and dig again and again, and you must work and sweat, and sweat and work, if ever you will find those spiritual treasures, those pearls of price that are hid under the ashes of corruption, that lie low in the very bowels of your souls.

Tell me, O doubting souls, hath that sweet word of the apostle been

[1] Conradus's motto was a notable rule, *Omnium mores, tuos imprimis observato*, observe all men's carriages, but especially thy own. [Query, Conradus Alfonsus Mantuanus, 1574?—G.]

[2] So saith Pliny, Seneca, and others.

ever made to stick in power upon you: 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 'Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith;' or, whether faith be in you, 'prove yourselves,' &c.[1] The precept is here doubled, to shew the necessity, excellency, and difficulty of the work; to shew that it is not a superficial, but a thorough, serious, substantial examination that must enable a man to know whether he hath precious faith or no; whether he be Christ's spouse or the devil's strumpet. All is not gold that glisters; all is not faith that men call faith; therefore, he that would not prove a cheater to his own soul, must take some pains to search and examine how all is within. Climacus[2] reports, that the ancients used to keep in a little book a memorial of what they did in the day against their night reckoning. But ah! how few be there in those days that keeps a diary of God's mercies and their own infirmities, of spiritual experiences and the inward operations of heavenly graces! Seneca reports of a heathen man that every night asked himself these three questions: first, What evil hast thou healed this day? secondly, What vice hast thou stood against this day? thirdly, In what part art thou bettered this day? And shall not Christians take pains with their own hearts, and search day and night to find out what God hath done, and is a-doing there? God hath his doing hand, his working hand in every man's heart; either he is a-working there in ways of mercy or of wrath; either he is building up or a-plucking down; either he is a-making all glorious within, or else he is a-turning all into a hell. Well! doubting souls, remember this, that the soundest joy, the strongest consolation, flow from a thorough examination of things within. This is the way to know how it is with you for the present, and how it is like to go with you for the future. This is the way to put an end to all the wranglings of your hearts, and to put you into a possession of heaven on this side heaven.

(4.) *The fourth impediment* that keeps many precious souls from assurance is, *Their mistakes about the work of grace.* Look, as many hypocrites do take a good nature for grace, and those common gifts and graces that may be in a Saul, a Jehu, a Judas, for a special distinguishing grace, &c., so the dear saints of God are very apt to take grace for a good nature, to take pearls of price for stones of no value, to take special grace for common grace. Many trembling souls are apt to call their faith unbelief, with the man in the Gospel, Mark ix. 24, and their confidence presumption, and their zeal passion, &c.; and by this means many are kept off from assurance. Now, the way to remove this impediment is, wisely and seriously to distinguish between renewing grace and restraining grace, betwixt common grace and special grace, betwixt temporary grace and sanctifying grace. Now, the difference betwixt the one and the other I have shewed in ten particulars in my treatise called 'Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices,' from page 217 to page 230; and to that I refer thee for full and complete satisfaction.

[1] πειράζετε, from πείρω to pierce through, &c., δοκιμάζετε, to prove and try, as goldsmiths try their metal by the fire and the touchstone. God brings not a pair of scales to weigh our grace, but a touchstone to try our graces. If our gold be true, though it be never so little, it will pass current with him. He will not 'quench the smoking flax,' &c. [Mat. xii. 20.]

[2] Climacus, Joannes, surnamed *the Learned*, called Climacus on account of a work written by him, entitled κλίμαξ.—G.

If thou wilt cast thy eye upon the particulars, I doubt not but thou wilt find that profit and content that will recompense thee for thy pains. And this I thought more convenient to hint to thee, than to write over the same things that there thou wilt find to thy delight and settlement.[1]

(5.) *The fifth impediment* to assurance is, *Their grieving and vexing the Spirit of grace by not hearkening to his voice, by refusing his counsel, by stopping the ear, by throwing water upon that fire he kindles in their souls, and by attributing that to the Spirit that is to be attributed to men's own passions and distempers, and to the prince of darkness and his associates.*[2] By these and such like ways, they sad that precious Spirit that alone can glad them, they set him a-mourning that alone can set them a-rejoicing, they set him a-grieving that alone can set them a-singing; and therefore it is that they sigh it out with Jeremiah, Lam. i. 16, 'Behold, he that should comfort our souls, stands afar off.'[3] Ah, doubting souls! if ever you would have assurance, you must observe the motions of the Spirit, and give up yourselves to his guidance; you must live by his laws, and tread in his steps; you must live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit; you must let him be chief in your souls. This is the way to have him to be a sealing Spirit, a witnessing Spirit to your hearts. Believe it, souls, if this be not done, you will be far off from quietness and settlement. The word that in 1 John iii. 19 is rendered 'assure,' signifies to persuade: to note to us that our hearts are forward and peevish, and apt to wrangle and raise objections against God, against Christ, against the Scripture, against our own and others' experiences, and against the sweet hints and joyings of the Spirit; and this they will do, especially when we omit what the Spirit persuades us to.[4] Omissions raises fears and doubts, and makes work for hell, or for the Spirit and physician of souls. Or else, when we do that which the Spirit dissuades us from. If you be kind and obedient to the Spirit, it will not be long night with your souls; but if you rebel and vex him, he will make your life a hell, by withholding his ordinary influences, by denying to seal you to the day of redemption, and by giving you up to conflict with horrors and terrors, &c., Isa. lxiii. 10. Therefore, be at the Spirit's beck and check, and assurance and joy will ere long attend you.

(6.) *The sixth impediment* to assurance is, *Doubting souls making their sense, reason, and feeling the judges of their spiritual conditions.* Now so long as they take this course, they will never reach to assurance. Reason's arm is too short to reach this jewel assurance. This pearl of price is put in no hand but that hand of faith that reaches from earth to heaven. What tongue can express or heart conceive the fears, the doubts, the clouds, the darkness, the perplexities that will arise from the soul's reasoning thus:—I find not that the countenance of God is

[1] The same man sells that, that sells this; more to that point I cannot easily say.

[2] *Nil nisi sanctum a sancto Spiritu prodire potest*, nothing can come from the Holy Spirit but that which is holy.

[3] Smoke drives away bees, and an ill-savour drives away doves. Sin is such a smoke, such an ill-savour, as drives away this dove-like Spirit.

[4] πείσομεν. The soul will not quite leave wrangling, till it be quiet in the bosom of Christ.

towards me as before, Gen. xxxi. 5; therefore, surely my condition is bad; I feel not those quickenings, those cheerings, those meltings as before; I am not sensible of those secret stirrings and actings of the Spirit and grace in my soul as before; I do not hear such good news from heaven as before; therefore certainly God is not my God, I am not beloved, I am not in the state of grace, I have but deceived myself and others; and therefore the issue will be that I shall die in my sins. To make sense and feeling the judges of our spiritual conditions, what is it but to make ourselves happy and miserable, righteous and unrighteous, saved and damned in one day, ay, in one hour, when sense and reason sit as judges upon the bench? Hath God made sense and feeling the judges of your conditions? No. Why, then, will you? Is your reason Scripture? Is your sense Scripture? Is your feeling Scripture? No. Why, then, will you make them judges of your spiritual estate? Is not the word the judge, by which all men and their actions shall be judged at last? 'The word that I have spoken,' says Christ, 'shall judge you in the last day,' John xii. 48. 'To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light, or no morning in them,' Isa. viii. 20 [שחר אין־לו]. Why, then, O doubting souls, will you make your sense and feeling the judge, not only of your condition, but of the truth itself? What is this but to dethrone God, and to make a god of your sense and feeling? What is this, but to limit and bind up the Holy One of Israel? What is this but to toss the soul to and fro, and to expose it to a labyrinth of fears and scruples? What is this but to cast a reproach upon Christ, to gratify Satan, and to keep yourselves upon the rack? Well! doubting souls, the counsel that I shall give you is this, be much in believing, and make only the Scripture the judge of your condition; maintain the judgment of the word against the judgment of sense and feeling; and if upon a serious, sincere, and impartial comparing of thy heart and the word together, of thy ways and the word together, the word speaks thee out to be sincere, to be a Nathanael, to be a new creature, to be born again, to have an immortal seed in thee, &c., cleave to the testimony of the word, joy in it, rest upon it, and give no more way to fears and doubts. Let thy countenance be no more sad; for nothing can speak or make that soul miserable, that the word speaks out to be happy,[1] Ps. cxix. 24, עצתי אנשי

Constantine would have all differences and disputes in the Nicene Council ended by the Bible.[2] O doubting souls, look cheerfully to this, that all differences and controversies that arise in your hearts be ended by the word. There is danger in looking beside the Scripture, or beyond the Scripture, or short of the Scripture, or upon sense and feeling, so much as upon the Scripture; therefore let the word be always the man of thy counsel: no way to assurance and joy, to settlement and establishment, like this. If you are resolved to make sense and feeling the judge of your conditions, you must resolve to live in fears, and lie down in tears.

[1] *Inclinavit Deus Scripturas ad infantium et lactantium capacitatem*, saith one. God hath bowed down the Scriptures to the capacity even of babes and sucklings. *Id agit tota scriptura, et credimus Deum esse misericordem.*—Luther.

[2] See 'Lives' of the Emperor, and all accounts of the Council of Nice.—G.

(7.) *The seventh impediment* to assurance is, *Men's remissness, carelessness, laziness, and overliness*[1] *in religious services, and in the exercise of their graces.*[2] Ah, how active and lively are men in pursuing after the world! but how lifeless and unactive in the ways of grace and holiness! Ah, doubting Christians! remember this, that the promise of assurance and comfort is made over, not to lazy but laborious Christians; not to idle but to active Christians; not to negligent but to diligent Christians:[3] John xiv. 21–23, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.' Now 'Judas saith unto him (not Iscariot), Lord! how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If any man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' So 2 Peter i. 10, 11, 'Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.[4]

A lazy Christian shall always want four things, viz., comfort, content, confidence, and assurance. God hath made a separation between joy and idleness, between assurance and laziness; and therefore it is impossible for thee to bring these together that God hath put so far asunder. Assurance and joy are choice donatives that Christ gives only to laborious Christians. The lazy Christian hath his mouth full of complaints, when the active Christian hath his heart full of comforts. God would have the hearts of his children to be hot in religious services. 'Be fervent' (or seething hot, as it is in the original) 'in spirit, serving the Lord,'[5] Rom. xii. 11.

That service that hath not heavenly heat, that hath not divine fire in it, is no service, it is lost service. A lazy spirit is always a losing spirit. Oh! remember, lazy Christians, that God is a pure act, therefore he loves activeness in religious services. Remember the angels, those princes of glory, are full of life and activity, and they always behold the Father's face in glory, Mat. xviii. 10. Remember, he that will find rich minerals must dig deep, he that will be rich must sweat for it, he that will taste the kernel must crack the shell, he that will have the marrow must break the bone, he that will wear the garland must run the race, he that will ride in triumph must get the victory; so he that will get assurance must be active and lively in duty, Prov. ii. 4–6. It is only fervent prayer that is effectual prayer, it is only the working prayer that works wonders in heaven, and that brings down wonderful assurance into the heart.[6] Cold prayers shall never have any warm answers; God will suit his returns to our requests; lifeless services shall have

[1] Overly, *i.e.* slightly, superficially.—G.

[2] The active Christian goes to heaven, *alacri animo ac plena fiducia.*

[3] *Labor omnia vincit.*

[4] *Non amat qui non zelat.*—Augustine. σπουδάσατε is a significant word; it signifies all manner of earnestness, seriousness, and continuance in doing. Also it signifies a speedy and swift putting of things in execution.

[5] ζέοντες signifies seething hot.

[6] James v. 16. ἐνεργουμένη, the working prayer.

lifeless answers; when men are dull, God will be dumb. Elias prayed earnestly, or as it is in the Greek, 'He prayed in prayer,' and God answered him.[1] Many there be that pray, but they do not pray in prayer, they are not lively and earnest with God in prayer; and therefore justice shuts out their prayers. When one desired to know what kind of man Basil was, there was, saith the history, presented to him in a dream, a pillar of fire with this motto, *Talis est Basilus*, Basil is such a one, all on a-light fire for God. Ah! lazy, doubting Christians, were you all on a-light fire, in hearing, in praying, &c.; it would not be long before the windows of heaven would be open, before God would rain down manna, before he would drop down assurance into your bosoms.[2]

My advice to you, lazy Christians, is this, cease complaining of the want of assurance, and be no more formal, slight, and superficial in religious services, but stir up yourselves, and put out all your might and strength in holy actions, and you shall experimentally find that it will not be long before you shall have such good news from heaven, as will fill you with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.[3]

(8.) *The eighth impediment* to assurance is, *Men's living in the neglect of some ordinance, or in the omission of some religious duties.*[4] They seek Christ in some of his ways, but not in all; they wait upon him in this and that ordinance, but not in every ordinance. Are there not many doubting souls that wait upon God, in hearing the word of life, and yet neglect, and make light of waiting upon Christ, in breaking the bread of life? Are there not many that are very careful daily to perform family duties, and yet are very rarely found in closet services? Some there be that are all ear, all for hearing; and others there be that are all tongue, all for speaking and praying; and others there be that are all eye, all for believing, all for searching, all for inquiring into this and that; and others there be that are all hand, all for receiving the Lord's supper, &c. And seriously, when I consider these things, I cease wondering that so many want assurance, and do rather wonder that any obtain assurance, considering how few there be that are conscientious and ingenuous in waiting upon God in every way and service wherein he is pleased to manifest his grace and favour to poor souls.

Well! doubting souls, remember this, God will give assurance in one ordinance, when he will deny it in another, that you may seek his face in all. God loves as well that you should wait on him as that you should wrestle with him. He that will not give God the honour of attending him in every duty, in every ordinance, may long enough complain of the want of assurance, before God will give him the white stone and the new name, that none knows but he that hath it, Rev. ii. 17. Many of the precious sons of Zion have found God giving assurance in one

[1] προσευχῇ, προσηύξατο, he prayed in prayer.

[2] Most men have more heat in their brains than in their hearts and services; and therefore it is that they walk in darkness, that they want assurance.

[3] God shot Anastasius the emperor to death with a thunderbolt for his lukewarmness, saith the historian. [Evagrius, iii. 29, *seq.*; Cedrenus, pp. 354–365.—G.]

[4] Omission of diet breeds diseases, and makes the life uncomfortable, yea, sometimes a burden to a man. So the omission of holy duties and services breeds many fears, doubts, and questions in the soul, about its own sincerity, about its interest in Christ, about its finding audience and acceptance with God; and so makes the life of a Christian very uncomfortable, yea, a burden to him.

ordinance, others have found him giving assurance in another ordinance. God speaks peace to some in such and such services, and comfort to others in such and such duties. Therefore, as you would have assurance, O doubting souls, seek the Lord in every way and service, wherein he is pleased to make known his glory and goodness. In hearing, Christ opens his box of ointments to some, and in praying and breaking of bread, he lets his sweet myrrh fall upon the hearts of others. Some have seen the glory of the Lord in the sanctuary, that have been clouded in their closets; others have heard a sweet still voice in their closets, that have sat long trembling in the sanctuary. Remember, doubting souls, Moab and Ammon were banished the sanctuary to the tenth generation, for a mere omission, because they met not God's Israel in the wilderness with bread and water, Deut. xxiii. 3, 4.[1] And I verily believe, that God doth banish, as I may say, many from his favourable presence, as Absalom did David, for their sinful omissions, for their non-attendance upon him in all his ways. Therefore, if ever you would have assurance, seek the Lord, not only while he may be found, but also in every gracious dispensation where he may be found. 'Then shall the joy of the Lord be your strength,' and his 'glory shall rest upon you.' 'The days of your mourning shall be ended,' and 'you shall lie down in peace, and none shall make you afraid.'[2] I would earnestly desire you, O doubting souls, seriously to consider, that all the ways of Christ are ways of pleasantness; as Solomon speaks, Prov. iii. 17, not only this way or that way, but every way of Christ is a way of pleasantness; every way is strewed with roses, every way is paved with gold, every way is attended with comfort and refreshing. So the psalmist, 'Thy paths drop fatness,' Ps. lxv. 11, 12; not only this or that path, but all the paths of God drops fatness. Oh then, walk in every way, tread in every path of God, as you would have your souls filled with marrow and fatness, Ps. lxiii. 5; and never forget that choice saying of the prophet Isaiah, 'Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways,' Isa. lxiv. 5.[3] They that would have God to meet with them in a way of peace and reconciliation, in a way of grace and favour, must remember God in all his ways; not only in this or that particular way, but in every way wherein he is pleased to cause his glory to shine. Therefore, doubting souls, cease complaining, and be more conscientious and ingenuous in waiting upon God in all his appointments, and it will not be long night with you.

(9.) *The ninth impediment* that keeps Christians from assurance is *An immoderate love of the world.*[4] Their thoughts and hearts are so busied about getting the world and keeping the world, that they neither seek assurance as they should, nor prize assurance as they should, nor lament the want of assurance as they should, nor study the worth and

[1] Here the proverb is most false that says, *Modicum non nocet*, a little hurts not. Ah! this or that little omission, as you call it, may expose men to a great deal of wrath, Mat. xxv. 41–46. They did not rob the saints, but omitted the relieving of them, which was their ruin. [2] Neh. viii. 9; Isa. lx. 20; Levit. xxvi. 6.—G.

[3] פגעת, to run and meet the soul, as the father of the prodigal ran and met him afar off with bowels of love and pity.

[4] *Multi amando res noxias sunt miseri, habendo miseriores*, many are miserable by loving hurtful things, but are more miserable by having them.

excellency of assurance as they should; and therefore it is no wonder, that such are without assurance. As it is very hard for a rich man to enter into heaven, Mat. xix. 23, 24, so it is very hard for a worldly Christian to get assurance of heaven. The 'thick clay,' Hab. ii. 6, of this world doth so affect him, and take him, so satisfy him, and sink him, that he is not able to pursue after assurance, with that life and love, with that fervency and frequency, as those must do that will obtain it. It is said, Gen. xiii. 2, 'That Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold; according to the Hebrew כָּבֵד, Abraham was very heavy; to shew, saith one, that riches are a heavy burden, and a hindrance many times to a Christian's comfort and confidence, to his happiness and assurance.[1] Solomon got more hurt by his wealth, than he got good by his wisdom.[2] Such a fire rose out of his worldly enjoyments, as did even consume and burn up his choicest spirits and his noblest virtues; under all his royal robes, he had but a thread-bare soul. Sicily, saith one, is so full of sweet flowers, that dogs cannot hunt there, the scent of the sweet flowers diverteth their smell.[3] And ah! what doth all the sweet delights and contents of this world, but make men lose the scent of heaven, but divert men from hunting after assurance, and from running after Christ, in the sweetness of his ointments.[4]

The creature is all shadow, and vanity of vanities. Vanity is the very quintessence of the creature, and all that can possibly be extracted out of it. It is *filia noctis*, like Jonah's gourd. A man may sit under its shadow for a while, but it soon decays and dies. 'Why shouldst thou set thy heart upon that which is not?' Prov. xxiii. 5. Were ever riches true to them that trusted them? As the bird hops from twig to twig, so doth riches hop from man to man, &c. Worldly Christians, cease complaining of the want of assurance, and sincerely humble and abase your souls before the Lord; for that you have so eagerly pursued after lying vanities; for that you have in so great a measure forsaken the fountain of living water; for that with Martha you have been busied about many things, when Christ and assurance, the two things necessary, have been so much neglected and disregarded by you. Get this world, this moon, under your feet; take no rest till you have broken through this silken net, till you have got off these golden fetters.[5] A heart that is full of the world, is a heart full of wants. Ah! the joy, the peace, the comfort, the confidence, the assurance, that such hearts wants. The stars which have least circuit, are nearest the pole; and men whose hearts are least entangled with the world, are always nearest to God, and to the assurance of his favour. Worldly Christians, remember this, you and the world must part, or else assurance and your souls will never meet. When a worldly Christian is saved, he is saved as by fire; and before ever he shall be assured of

[1] *Divitibus ideo pietas deest, quia nihil deest*, rich men's wealth proves an hindrance to their happiness.

[2] *Divitiæ corporales paupertatis plenæ sunt.*—Augustine. . . . Earthly riches are full of poverty.

[3] *Diodorus Siculus.* The same saith Aristotle.

[4] *Quam sordet mihi terra cum cœlum intueor?*—Adrian.

[5] *Si terram amas terra es; si Deum amas, quid vis ut dicam, Deus es.*—Augustine. . . . If thou lovest the earth, thou art earthly; but if thou lovest God, thou shalt have whatever thou wilt ask of God.

his salvation, he must cry out, *Omnes humanæ consolationes, sunt desolationes,* all human consolations are but desolations. God will not give the sweetmeats of heaven, to those that are gorged and surfeited with the delicates of the earth. The cock upon the dunghill prefers a barley-corn above the choicest pearl; such dunghill Christians that prefer a little barley-corn above this pearl of price, assurance; that, with Esau, prefer a morsel of meat before this blessing of blessings; that prefer Paris above Paradise,[1] God's coin above his countenance, may at last with Esau seek, and seek with tears, this heavenly jewel assurance, and yet, as he, be rejected and repulsed, Heb. xii. 16, 17.[2]

(10.) *The tenth impediment* that keeps Christians from assurance, is, *The secret cherishing and running out of their hearts to some bosom, darling sin.* It is dark night with the soul, when the soul will cast a propitious eye upon this or that bosom sin, and secretly say, 'Is it not a little one, and my soul shall live?' Gen. xix. 20, though God and conscience hath formerly checked and whipped the soul for so doing. Ah! how many be there that dally and play with sin, even after they have put up many prayers and complaints against sin, and after they have lamented and bitterly mourned over their sins. Many there be that complain of their deadness, barrenness, frowardness, conceitedness, censoriousness, and other baseness; and yet are ready at every turn to gratify, if not to justify, those very sins that they complain against. No wonder that such want assurance. After the Israelites had ate manna in the wilderness, and drunk 'water out of the rock,' after God had been to them a 'cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night,' after he had led them by the arms, and kept them as the apple of his eye, after he had made them spectators of his wonders, they hankered after 'the flesh-pots of Egypt;' so when, after God hath given a man a new name and a white stone, after he hath made a report of his love to the soul, after he hath taken a man up into paradise, after he hath set a man upon his knee, and carried him in his bosom, after he hath spoke peace and pardon to the soul, Ps. lxxxv. 8, for the soul to return to folly, oh! this cannot but prove a woful hindrance to assurance, this will provoke God to change his countenance, and to carry it not as a friend, but as an enemy. When love is abused, justice takes up the iron rod. God will strike hard and home, when men kick against the bowels of mercy. God hath made an everlasting separation betwixt sin and peace, betwixt sin and joy, and betwixt sin and assurance. God will be out with that man, that is in with his sin. If sin and the soul be one, God and the soul must needs be two. He that is resolved to dally with any sin, he must resolve to live in many fears. Never forget this; he that savoureth any one sin, though he foregoeth many, doth but as Benadab, recover of one disease, and die of another;[3] yea, he takes pains to plunge himself into two hells, a hell here, and a hell hereafter. Therefore, as ever thou wouldst have assurance, offer up thy Isaac, part with thy Benjamin, pull out thy right

[1] Probably the allusion is to the saying of the Duke of Bourbon: 'Give me but a palace in Paris, and I care not for a place in paradise.' See Epistle Dedicatory to 'An Ark for all God's Noahs.'—G.

[2] *Mundus cadaver est, et petentes eum sunt canes,* is an Arabic proverb; that is, the world is a carcase, and those that hunt after it are dogs. This proverb makes a great many of our glistering professors to be but dogs.

[3] Query, Benhadad?—G.

eye, cut off thy right hand; otherwise assurance and joy will not be thy portion.

Now that I may remove this impediment, which is of such dangerous consequence to Christians' souls, and keep Christians for ever from smiling upon any bosom sin, I shall first lay down a few considerations to provoke them to dally and play no more with sin, but to put off that sin that does so easily beset them, that sticks so close unto them, Heb. xii. 1 (εὐπερίστατον); and then in the second place, I shall propound some means that may contribute to the bringing under of bosom sins, that so it may be no longer night with the soul.

The first motive to provoke you to put out all your strength and might against bosom sins, that you are so apt to play withal, is *seriously to consider, that this will be a strong and choice demonstration and evidence of the sincerity and uprightness of your hearts:* Ps. xviii. 23, 'I was also upright with him,[1] and I kept myself from mine iniquity.' I kept a strict and diligent watch upon that particular sin that I found myself most inclined unto. And this, says David, is a clear evidence to me of the uprightness of my heart with God. The truth is, there is no hypocrite in the world but doth dandle and dally with some bosom sin or other; and though at times, and upon carnal accounts, they seem to be very zealous against this and that sin, yet at the very same time their hearts stand strongly and affectionately engaged to some bosom sin, as might be shewed in Saul, Judas, and Herod, Job xx. 12, 13. Therefore, as ever you would have a sure argument of your uprightness, trample upon your Delilahs. This very evidence of thy uprightness may yield thee more comfort and refreshing in a day of trouble and darkness, than for the present thou dost apprehend, or hast faith to believe. Some there be that can tell thee, that the joy of the bridegroom, nor the joy of the harvest, is not to be compared to that joy that arises in the soul from the sense and evidence of a man's own uprightness, 2 Cor. i. 12. Sincerity is the very queen of virtues; she holds the throne, and will be sure to keep it. Yea, the very sight of it in the soul makes a man sit cheerful and thankful, Noah-like, in the midst of all tempests and storms. Look, as the playing with a bosom sin speaks out hypocrisy, so the mortifying of a bosom sin speaks out sincerity.

The second motive to provoke doubting souls to trample upon their bosom sins, is *solemnly to consider, that the conquest of their darling sins will render the conquests of other sins easy.*

When Goliah was slain, the rest of the Philistines fled, 1 Sam. xvii. 51, 52. When a general in an army is cut off, the common soldiers are easily routed and destroyed. Ah! complaining, doubting souls, did you but take the courage and resolution to fall with all your might and spiritual strength upon those particular sins that stick so close unto you, and that do so easily captivate you, you would find, that the great mountains that are before you would soon be made a plain, Zech. iv. 7. Other sins will not be long-lived, when justice is done upon your bosom sins. Thrust but a dart through the heart of Absalom, and a complete conquest will follow,[2] 2 Sam. xviii. 14.

[1] עִמּוֹ, *gnimmo*, with him.

[2] The Lacedæmonians, in all battles, resolved to go home conquerors, or to die conquered.

The third motive to provoke you to crucify your bosom sins, be they what they will, is, *seriously to consider the very great damage that your souls have already sustained by your bosom sins.*

Saul, by casting an amorous eye upon Agag, lost his crown and kingdom; Samson, by dallying with his Delilah, lost his strength, sight, light, liberty, and life. But what are these losses to thy loss of spiritual strength, to thy loss of communion with God, to thy loss of the Spirit of light, life, liberty, and glory; to thy loss of joy unspeakable, and peace that passes all understanding; and to thy loss of those fresh and sparkling hopes of glory that were once sparkling in thy breast?[1]

Mark Antony was so far bewitched with his Cleopatra, that in the heat of the battle of Actium, when the empire of the world, his life, and all lay at stake, that he fled from Augustus to pursue her, to the ruin and loss of all.[2] So many there are bewitched to some Cleopatra, to some darling sin or other, that they pursue the enjoyment of them to the loss of God, Christ, heaven, and their souls for ever.

Ah! Christians, that the sense of what you have formerly lost, and of what you daily lose by your playing with sin, might provoke you to set upon some effectual course for the mortifying of them!

It was a blasphemous speech of Henry the Second, who said, when Mentz, his city, was taken, 'That he should never love God any more, who suffered a city so dear to him to be taken from him.' But it will be a blessed and happy thing for you, in uprightness to say, Oh, we will never love, we will never favour, we will never dally with our bosom sins more; for they have damnified us in our spiritual enjoyments, and in our spiritual returns from heaven. Shall the sense of outward losses by this and that instrument, work us out of love with them? And shall not the sense of our spiritual losses by bosom sins, work us much more out with them. Ah, Lord! of what iron mettle is that heart that can look upon those sad losses that hath attended playing with bosom sins, and yet still dally with those Delilahs?[3]

The fourth motive to provoke you to be the death of your darling sins, is, *solemnly to consider, that the conquest and effectual mortifying of one bosom sin, will yield a Christian more glorious joy, comfort, and peace, than ever he hath found in the gratifying and committing of all other sins.*[4] The pleasure and sweetness that follows victory over sin, is a thousand times beyond that seeming sweetness that is in the gratifying of sin. The joy that attends the subduing of sin is a noble joy, a pure joy, a peculiar joy, an increasing joy, and a lasting joy; but that joy that attends the committing of sin is an ignoble joy, a corrupt joy, a decreasing joy, a dying joy. The truth is, were there the least real joy in sin, there could be no perfect hell, where men shall most perfectly sin, and be most perfectly tormented with their sin.

[1] Some there be that had rather lose their hearts than their conceits; others had rather lose their souls than their sins: these shall be chronicled in hell for fools and bedlams.

[2] Dion. Cassius, lib. xii. *seq.*, and xxxi. *seq.*; and Antony and Cleopatra of Shakespeare, iii. 7.—G.

[3] Nay, how many in these days are mad against public instruments for seeming losses?

[4] The heathens, as many professors now, had not the right art of mortifying sin. *Sapientia eorum plerumque abscondit vitia, non abscindit*, all their wisdom was to hide a lust, not to quench it; therefore their joy was like the crackling of thorns under a pot.

Ah! doubting Christians, as ever you would have good days, as ever you would walk in the light, as ever you would, like the angels, have always harps in your hands, and hallelujahs in your mouths, be restless, till in the spirit and power of Jesus, you have brought under the sin that sticks so close unto you. Remember this, nothing below the conquest of bosom sins can make a jubilee in the heart. It is not a man's whining and complaining over sin, but his mortifying of sin, that will make his life a paradise of pleasure.

If, notwithstanding all that hath been said, you are still resolved to dally with sin, then you must resolve to live as a stranger to God, and as a stranger to assurance and peace; you must expect sad trials without, and sore troubles within; you must expect to find Satan playing his part both as a lion and as a serpent, both as a devil and as an angel of light. You must expect either no news from heaven, or but bad news from heaven; and you must expect that conscience will play the part both of a scolding wife and of a lion that wants his prey;[1] and this shall be your just reward for playing with sin. If you like the reward, then take your course, and dally with sin still; if otherwise, then sacrifice your Isaac.[2]

The fifth motive to work you to trample upon your bosom sins is, *wisely to consider, that it is your duty and glory to do that every day, that you would willingly do upon a dying day.* Ah! how would you live and love upon a dying day? How would you admire God, rest upon God, delight in God, long for God, and walk with God upon a dying day? How would you hate, loathe, and abhor your bosom sins upon a dying day? How would you complain of your bosom sins, and pray against your bosom sins, and mourn over your bosom sins, and watch against your bosom sins, and fly from all occasions that should tend to draw you to close with your bosom sins upon a dying day?[3]

Ah! doubting souls, would you not for all the world gratify your bosom sins upon a dying day, and will you gratify them on other days, which, for anything you know to the contrary, may prove your dying day? Thrice happy is that soul that labours with all his might to do that at first that he would fain do at last; that doth that on every day, that he would give a thousand worlds to do on a dying day. No way to assurance like this; no way to joy and comfort like this; no way to rest and peace like this; no way to the kingdom, to the crown, like this.

I earnestly beseech you, trembling souls, when you find your spirits running out to bosom sins, that you would lay your hands upon your hearts, and thus expostulate the case: O our souls, would you thus dally and play with sin upon a dying day? would you thus stroke and hug sin upon a dying day? would you not rather shew all the dislike and hatred that is imaginable against it? would you not tremble at sin more than at hell? and abhor the very occasions of sin more than the most venomous serpent in all the world? would you not rather suffer the

[1] Conscience is *index, judex, vindex.*

[2] The leper under the law was still to keep his hair shaven, Lev. xiv. 5. So should we be still a-cutting and shaving, that though the roots of sin remain, yet they may not grow and sprout.

[3] Some heathens and many profane persons have earnestly desired that they had done that at first that they would fain have done at last, but could not. The worst would be good, and do good at last; but at last they will be found the best and wisest, [who] have made it their business to do that every day that every one would do upon a dying day.

worst and greatest punishments, than to smile upon a darling sin upon a dying day? Yes; oh would you fain do this upon a dying day? Why not then every day? Why not then every day, O our souls?

The sixth motive to provoke you to fall with all your might upon bosom sins is, *seriously to consider, that till this be done, fears and doubts will still haunt the soul; the soul will still be fearing that surely all is naught, and that that work that is wrought upon it is not a real but a counterfeit work; that it is not a peculiar and special work, but a common work, that a man may have and perish.* Till this be done, the soul can never be able to see grace in his own native beauty and glory.[1] The hugging of sin in a corner, will raise such a dust in the soul, that it cannot be able to see these pearls of glory sparkling and shining. Till this be done, doubting souls, you will be but babes, and shrubs,[2] and dwarfs in Christianity. The hankering of the soul after sin, is the casting of water upon the Spirit; it is the laming of grace, it is the clipping the wings of faith and prayer; so that the soul can neither be confident, nor fervent, frequent nor constant in religious services; so that it will unavoidably follow, such souls will be like Pharaoh's lean kine, poor and starveling.[3] Look, as many men are kept low in their outward estates, by having a back door to some Herodians;[4] so many doubting souls are kept low in spirituals, by their hankering after some particular sins.

Remember, Christians, sin is the soul's sickness, the soul's weakness. If the body be weak and diseased, it grows not. Sin is poison that turns all nourishment into corruption, and so hinders the growth of the soul in grace and holiness. Ah! Christians, as ever you would be rid of your fears and doubts, as ever you would see the beauty and glory of grace, as ever you would be eminent and excellent in grace and holiness, see that effectual justice be done upon that Achan, that Jonah, that darling sin, that hath occasioned storms within and tempests without.

It was a grievous vexation to King Lysimachus, that his staying to drink one draught of water lost him his kingdom. Ah! Christians, it will grievously vex you, when you come to yourselves, and when you come to taste of the admirable pleasure that attends the conquest of sin, to consider that your hankering after this or that particular sin, hath been the loss of that joy and comfort, that peace and assurance, that is infinitely more worth than all the kingdoms of the world.[5]

Quest. But you may say to me, Oh we would fain have our bosom-sins subdued, we desire above all that they may be effectually mortified. These sons of Zeruiah we would have slain to choose; but what course must we take to bring under our darling sins, to get off our golden fetters, to get out of these silken snares?

To this question I shall give these answers:

The first means. If ever thou wouldst have mastery over this or that

[1] One flaw in a diamond doth not only take away the beauty, glory, and price of it, but it puts men to question whether it be a diamond. Ps. xl. 12, לראות, I am not able to see; sin had put out David's eyes. [2] Qu. 'scrubs'? as before, p. 271.—G.

[3] Gideon had seventy sons, and but one bastard; and yet that one bastard destroyed all the rest. You may easily apply it. [Judges viii. 30, *seq.*—G.]

[4] Qu. Herodiases? Cf. Mat. xiv. 3.—G.

[5] If there be but one crack in the honey-glass, there the wasp will be buzzing; and where there is but some one sin favoured, there Satan will be tempting and upbraiding.

bosom sin, then *engage all thy power and might against thy bosom sin, draw up thy spiritual forces, and engage them wholly against the sin that doth so easily beset thee.* As the king of Syria said to his captains, 'Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel,' 2 Chron. xviii. 30; so say I, your wisdom and your work, O doubting souls, lieth not in skirmishing with this or that sin, but in coming up to a close sharp fight with the king of Israel, with that darling sin that hath a kingly interest in you, and a kingly power over you.

Constantine the Great his symbol was, *Immedicabile vulnus ense rescindendum est*, when there is no hope of curing, men must fall a-cutting. Believe it, souls, you must fall a-cutting your bosom sins in pieces by the sword of the Spirit, as Samuel cut Agag in pieces in Gilgal before the Lord, or else you will never obtain a perfect cure, 1 Sam. xv. 33. Slight skirmishes will not do it; you must pursue your bosom sins to the death, or they will be the death of your souls.

The second means to bring under a bosom sin, is, *to labour to be most eminent and excellent in that particular grace that is most opposite to a man's bosom sin.*[1] As it is a Christian's glory to be eminent in every grace, so it is a Christian's special duty to excel in that particular grace that is most contrary to his darling sins. Is it pride, is it the world, is it hypocrisy, &c., that is thy bosom sin, that is the chief favourite in thy soul? Oh then, labour above all to be clothed with humility, to abound in heavenly-mindedness, to transcend in sincerity, &c., I know no surer, no choicer, no sweeter way, effectually to crucify a bosom sin, than this. He that comes up to this counsel, will not be long held in golden fetters, it will not be long before such a soul cries out, Victory, victory!

The third means to help us to trample upon bosom sins, is, *to look upon bosom sins now, as they will appear to us at last; to look upon them in the time of health, as they will appear to us in times of sickness; to look upon them in the time of our life, as they will appear to us in the day of our death.* Ah! souls, of all unpardoned sins, your bosom sins will be presented by God, conscience, and Satan at last, as the most filthy and ugly, as the most terrible and dreadful. Your bosom sins at last will appear to be those monsters, those fiends of hell that have most provoked God against you, that have shut up Christ's bowels of love and compassion from you, that have armed conscience against you, that have barred the gates of glory against you, that have prepared the hottest place in hell for you, and that have given Satan the greatest advantage eternally to triumph over you.[2] Ah! souls, at last your bosom sins will more press and oppress you, more sad and sink you, more terrify and amaze you, than all your other transgressions. Those sins that seem most sweet in life, will prove most bitter in death, Job xx. 11–29. Those pleasant morsels will prove thy greatest hell, when there is but a short step between thy soul and eternity. Ah! Christians, never look upon bosom sins, but with that eye which within a few hours you must behold them; and this, you will find by experience, will be a singular means to bring under your bosom sins.

[1] As when one bucket of a well goes up, the other goes down; as when one of the two laurels in Rome flourishes, the other withers; so when grace gets up, sin goes down; when grace flourishes, sin withers.

[2] Many there be that have found these things by woful experience. Woe, woe, to that soul that shall put it to the trial.

The fourth means to subdue bosom sins is, *to apply yourselves to extraordinary means, as fasting and prayer, &c.* Ordinary physic will not remove extraordinary distempers, nor ordinary duties will not remove bosom sins, who, by long and familiar acquaintance with the soul, are exceedingly strengthened and advantaged. You read of some devils in the Gospel that could not be cast out but by prayer and fasting, Mat. xvii. 14–22. So bosom sins are those white devils that will not, that cannot be cast out but by fervent and constant prayer, joined with fasting and humiliation. Souls that are serious and conscientious in observing of this rule will find such a divine power to attend their endeavours as will give them to 'lead captivity captive,' Eph. iv. 8, and to triumph over those white devils within, as Christ triumphed over principalities and powers upon the cross, Col. ii. 14, 15.

The fifth means. As you would have victory over bosom sins, *keep off from all those occasions that tend to lead thee to the gratifying of them.* He that shuns not the occasions of sin, tempts two at once, Satan and his own heart; he tempts Satan to tempt him to taste of forbidden fruit, and he tempts his own heart to feed upon forbidden fruit. 'Abstain from all appearance of evil,' 1 Thes. v. 22; 'hate the garment spotted by the flesh,' Jude 23. Whatever carries with it an ill show or shadow, favour or suspicion, that abstain from, that you may neither wound God nor the gospel, your own consciences nor others. If there be any fuel to feed thy bosom sin in thy house, remove it; or before thine eye, remove it; or in thy hand, remove it, put it far away. Thy soul cannot be safe, it cannot be secure, so long as the occasions of sin are thy companions. Wouldst thou have a clear evidence of the truth of thy grace, then shun the occasions of sin; wouldst thou imitate the choicest saints, then shun the occasions of sin; wouldst thou stand in shaking times, then keep off from the occasions of sin; wouldst thou keep always peace with God, and peace with conscience, then keep off from the occasions of sin; wouldst thou frustrate Satan's greatest designs, and countermine him in his deepest plots, then keep off from the occasions of sin; wouldst thou keep thy bones from breaking, and thy heart from bleeding, then keep off from the occasions of sin; wouldst thou keep down fears and doubts, and keep up faith and hope, then keep off from the occasions of sin; wouldst thou have assurance in life, and joy and peace in death, then keep off from the occasions of sin. Do this, and you do all; if you do not this, you do nothing at all.[1]

And thus I have done with the impediments that hinder souls from assurance, as also with the means to remove those impediments.

CHAPTER IV.

Containing several motives to provoke Christians to be restless till they have obtained a well-grounded assurance of their eternal happiness and blessedness.

(1.) *The first motive.* Now, the first motive that I shall lay down to

[1] Gen. xxxix. 10; Job xxxi. 1; Ps. xxvi. 4–6.

provoke you to get a well-grounded assurance, is, solemnly to consider, *That many are now dropped into hell that have formerly presumed of their going to heaven:* as those that came bouncing at heaven-gate, crying out, 'Lord, Lord, open to us, for we have prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name have done many wonderful works;' and yet that direful and dreadful sentence is passed upon them, 'Depart from me, ye workers of iniquities,' Mat. vii. 22, 26, 27.[1]

The foolish virgins were in a golden dream that they were as happy as the best, and yet, when they were awakened, they found the bridegroom entered into his glory, and the door of mercy shut against them, Mat. xxv. 10–12.[2] Men are naturally prone to flatter themselves that their sins are not sins, when indeed they be; and that they are but small sins, when they are great and grievous, Isa. xl. 27, Deut. xxix. 19; and they are apt to flatter themselves that they have grace when they have none; and that their grace is true, when it is but counterfeit; and that their condition is not so bad as others, when it is worse; and, with Agag, that the bitterness of death is past, when God hath his sword in his hand ready to execute the vengeance written.[3]

I have read of a madman at Athens that laid claim to every rich ship that came into the harbour, whenas he was poor, and had no part in any. Ah! this age is full of such mad souls, that lay claim to God and Christ, and the promises and gospel privileges, and all the glory of another world, when they are poor, and blind, and miserable, and wretched, and naked, when they are Christless and graceless, &c. Ah, Christians! doth it not therefore stand you much upon to labour for a well-grounded assurance, that so you may not miscarry to all eternity, but may at last be found worthy to receive a crown of glory and to enter into your Master's joy, which is a joy too great and too glorious to enter into you, and therefore you must enter into it, Mat. xxv. 21, 23.

(2.) *The second motive* to provoke Christians to get a well-grounded assurance is this, consider, *That there be a great many soul-flatterers, soul-deceivers, and soul-cheaters in the world.* The devil hath put his angelical robes upon many of his chief factors,[4] that they may the more easily and the more effectually deceive and delude the souls of men. This age affords many sad testimonies of this.[5] Ah! what multitudes be there, that to some blear eyes appear as angels of light, and yet in their principles and practices are but servants to the prince of darkness, labouring with all their might to make proselytes for hell, Mat. xxiii. 15, and to draw men to those wild notions, opinions, and conceits that will leave them short of heaven, yea, bring them down to the hottest, darkest, and lowest place in hell, if God do not by a miracle prevent it. Therefore you had need look about you, and see that you get a well-grounded assurance, and suffer not Satan to put a cheat upon your immortal souls. Christ hath foretold us, 'That in the last days there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, that shall say, Lo,

[1] So, few in the old world feared an eternal miscarriage.

[2] So were the Jews that cried out, 'The temple of the Lord! the temple of the Lord!'

[3] Prov. xxx. 12; Rev. iii. 17, 18; Micah iii. 11. I judge as in this world, so in hell: the most self-flattering souls will be the most miserable souls.

[4] 'Agents.'—G.

[5] Leo the emperor used to say, *Occulti inimici pessimi*, a close enemy is far worse than an open.

here is Christ, and lo, there is Christ,' Mat. xxiv. 23, 24. And verily this scripture is this day fulfilled in your ears. Ah, how many blasphemous wretches have there been in these days, that have asserted themselves to be the very Christ! And it is to me no little miracle, that the very earth hath not opened her mouth and swallowed up such monsters, such firebrands of hell.

The apostle tells you of some that 'lie in wait to deceive, by such sleights' as cheaters and false gamesters use at dice; he tells you of cunning crafty men that do diligently watch all advantages to work, draw, and win weak and unstable souls to those opinions, principles, and practices, that tend to drown them in everlasting perdition.[1] Satan's disciples and agents are notable method-mongers [μεθοδεια πλανης], they have a method of deceiving, they are doctors in all the arts of cozenage, and they will leave no means unattempted whereby they may draw men to build upon hay and stubble, upon this opinion and that notion, &c., that so men and their works may burn for ever together, 1 Cor. iii. 15.

It is reported of king Canutus, that he promised to make him the highest man in England, who should kill king Edmund Ironside, his co-rival; which, when one had performed, and expected his reward, he commanded him to be hung on the highest tower in London. So Satan and his factors, they promise poor souls that such and such opinions, and notions, &c., will thus and thus advantage them, and advance them; but in the close, poor souls shall find the promised crown turned into a halter, the promised comfort turned into a torment, the promised glory turned into ignominy, the promised exaltation turned into desolation, the promised heaven turned into a hell. This age is full of soul-flatterers, of soul-undoers, who, like evil chirurgeons, skin over the wound, but kill the patient. Flattery undid Ahab, and Herod, and Nero, and Alexander.[2]

Those flatterers that told Dionysius, that his spittle was as sweet as honey, undid him; and those flatterers that told Cæsar, that his freckles in his face were like the stars in the firmament, ruined him. And ah! how many young and old in these days have been lost and undone by those soul-flatterers, that lie in wait to ensnare and deceive the souls of men.[3] Oh that this very consideration might be set home by the hand of the Spirit, with that life and power upon your souls, as effectually to stir and provoke you to get a well-grounded assurance of your happiness and blessedness, that so you may stand fast, like the house built upon the rock, in the midst of all tempests and storms, that nothing may unsettle you, nor disquiet you, and that none may take away your crown, Mat. vii. 24, 25, Rev. iii. 11.

(3.) *The third motive* to stir you up to get a well-grounded assurance is this, consider, *That a well-grounded assurance of your happiness and blessedness will ease you, and free you of a threefold burden.* It will free you,

1. From a burden of cares.

[1] Eph. iv. 14. κυβεία signifies cogging with a die, πανουργία.

[2] Valerian's word was, *Non acerba sed blanda*, not bitter, but flattering words, do all the mischief. This many have found true by woful experience.

[3] Anastasius his motto was, *Mellitum venenum blanda oratio*, smooth talk often proves sweet poison. Many in these days have found it so. [Cf. references, *ante*.—G.]

2. From a burden of fears.
3. From a burden of doubts.

Now the burden of cares, ah Christians! causes thee to sit down sighing and groaning; ah! how doth the cares of getting this and that, and the cares of keeping this and that worldly content, disturb and distract, vex and rack the souls of men that live under the power of carking cares, Mat. xiii. 22. Oh, but now assurance of better things makes the soul sing care away, as that martyr said, 'My soul is turned to her rest; I have taken a sweet nap in Christ's lap, and therefore I will now sing away care, and will be careless according to my name.'[1] Assurance of a kingdom, of a crown, is a fire that burns up all those cares that ordinarily fill the head and distract the heart. There is no way to get off the burden of cares but by getting assurance.

Again, assurance will free you from the burden of fears, as well as from the burden of cares.[2] Now, your hearts are filled with fears of possessing the creature, with fears of wanting the creature, with fears of losing the creature, &c. And these fears make men turn, like the chameleon, into all colours, forms, and fashions, yea, they make their lives a hell. Oh, but now assurance will scatter all these fears, as the sun doth the clouds; it will extinguish these fears, as the sun doth the fire. Assurance made David divinely fearless, and divinely careless: 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me,' Ps. xxiii. 3. Ah! how full of fears and perplexities was Hagar, till the Lord opened her eyes to see the well of water that was near her, Gen. xxi. 16. So the soul will be full of fears and perplexities till it comes to see assurance, to enjoy assurance. Christians, when all is said that can be, this will be found at last a most certain truth, that there is no way to be effectually rid of your fears, but by obtaining a well-grounded assurance of your happiness and blessedness.

Again, assurance will rid you of your burden of doubts.[3] Now you are still a-doubting. Sometimes you doubt whether that you are a thorough Christian, and not an Agrippa, an almost Christian, an half Christian, as most professors are. Sometimes you doubt of your sonship, and that leads you to doubt of your heirship. Sometimes you doubt of your acquaintance with God, and that leads you to doubt of your access to God, and acceptance with God. Sometimes you doubt of your union with God, and those doubts lead you to doubt of the truth of your communion with God, &c. The truth is, your whole life is a life of doubting, and so it will be, till you reach to a well-grounded assurance.

Though the two disciples had Christ for their companion, yet their hearts were full of fears and doubts, whilst their eyes were held that they should not know him, Luke xxiv. 14, 15, &c. Till a Christian's

[1] John Careless, in a letter to Mr Philpot. *Acts et Mon.*, folio, 1743. [Foxe, by Townsend, viii. pp. 171–201; and Clarke, as before, pp. 441, 473.—G.]

[2] And men are apt to make elephants of flies, and giants of pigmies. Till men reach assurance, they will still create fears rather than want them.

[3] Remember, Christians, (1.) that doubts are bred and fed by ignorance and unbelief, and therefore are sinful; (2.) that they rob the soul of all joy, comfort, and content; (3.) they render men babes in Christianity; (4.) they throw reproach upon God, Christ, and the promises; (5.) they give Satan the greatest advantage against us.

eyes be open to see his assurance, his heart will be full of doubts and perplexities. Though Mary Magdalene was very near to Christ, yet she stands sighing, mourning, and complaining that they had stolen away her Lord, because she did not see him, John xx. 13–16. Christians! though you may be very near and dear to Christ, yet till you come to see your assurance, you will spend your days in doubting, mourning, and complaining. The sum of all is this, as you would be rid of your burden of cares, your burden of fears, and your burden of doubts, get a well-grounded assurance of your happiness and blessedness; but if you are in love with your burdens, then neglect but the making of your calling and election sure, and you shall certainly make sure your burdens; they shall rise with you, and walk with you, and lie down with you, till they make your lives a hell.

(4.) *The fourth motive* to provoke you to labour after a well-grounded assurance is, *To consider that Satan will labour with all his art and craft, with all his power and might, to keep you from attaining a well-grounded assurance of your happiness and blessedness.* Such is Satan's envy and enmity against a Christian's joy and comfort, that he cannot but act to the utmost of his line to keep poor souls in doubts and darkness.[1] Satan knows that assurance is a pearl of that price that will make the soul happy for ever; he knows that assurance makes a Christian's wilderness to be a paradise; he knows that assurance begets in Christians the most noble and generous spirits; he knows that assurance is that which will make men strong to do exploits, to shake his tottering kingdom about his ears; and therefore he is very studious and industrious to keep souls off from assurance, as he was to cast Adam out of paradise.

It is no wonder that Satan, who envied the first seeds of grace that divine love sowed in thy soul, that he should envy the increase of thy grace, yea, thy assurance, which is the top and royalty of grace. When thou wast a babe, Satan cast water upon thy smoking flax, that it might not flame forth into assurance; and now thou art grown up to some more maturity, he is raised in his enmity, so that he cannot but put out his power and policy to keep thee from assurance of felicity and glory. Satan envies thy candle-light, thy torch-light, thy star-light, how much more that the sun should shine upon thee! Satan envies thy eating of the crumbs of mercy under the table, how much more that, as a child, thou shouldst sit at Wisdom's table, and eat and drink abundantly of Wisdom's delicates! Satan envies thy feeding on husks among the swine, how much more that thou shouldst eat of the fatted calf! Satan envies thy sitting with Mordecai at the king's gate, how much more that thou shouldst wear the king's robes! Satan envies thy tasting of the least drop of comfort, how much more thy swimming in those pleasures that be at God's right hand for evermore! He envies thy sitting upon God's knee, how much more, then, thy lying in his bosom! He envies thy being admitted into his service, how much more that thou shouldst be of his court and council!

[1] It is said of Marcellus, the Roman general, that he could not be quiet, *Nec victor, nec victus*, neither conquered, nor conqueror. Satan's envy is such against the joy and comfort of the saints, that he cannot rest, nor cease from making use of all his wiles, whereby poor souls may be kept off from assurance, and their lives made a burden to them.

Some say of the crystal, that it hath such a virtue in it, that the very touching of it quickens other stones, and puts a lustre and beauty upon them. Assurance is that heavenly crystal that quickens souls, and that casts a beauty and a glory upon souls; and this makes the devil mad.

Satan knows that assurance is manna in a wilderness, it is water out of a rock, it is a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. He knows that assurance is a salve for all sores, and physic for all diseases, and a remedy against every malady. He knows that assurance is a Christian's anchor at sea, and his shield upon land; and that it is a staff to support him, and a sword to defend him, and a pavilion to hide him, and a cordial to cheer him; and therefore it is that he labours, both as a lion and as a serpent, to keep poor souls from a well-grounded assurance. This son of the morning is fallen from the top of glory to the bottom of misery, and therefore he strives to make all as miserable and unhappy as himself.[1]

Ah! Christians, have not you need to seek assurance with all your might, who have to do with so mighty an adversary, who cares not what torments he heaps upon himself, so he may prove your tormentor, by keeping your souls and assurance asunder? Oh that this very consideration might make you restless, till you have got this 'white stone' in your bosoms!

(5.) *The fifth motive* to provoke you to get a well grounded assurance is this, consider *that a well grounded assurance is a jewel of that incomparable value, it is such a pearl of price as will abundantly recompense the soul for all the cost and charge it shall be at to enjoy it.* Aye, the enjoyment of assurance in that hour, when the soul shall sit upon thy trembling lips, ready to take her leave of thee, and all the world, will richly recompense thee for all those prayers, tears, sighs and groans that thou hast breathed out in one place or another, in one service or another.[2] Surely the gold in the mine will recompense the digger; the crown, in the end, will recompense the runner; the fruit in the vineyard will recompense the dresser; the corn in the barn will recompense the reaper; and the increase of the stock will recompense the shepherd; so assurance at last will abundantly recompense the soul for all its knocking, weeping, and waiting at mercy's door. God will never suffer 'the seed of Jacob to seek his face in vain,' Isa. xlv. 19. There is a reward not only *in* keeping, but also *for* keeping of his commands, Ps. xix. 11. Joseph, for his thirteen years' imprisonment, had the honour to reign fourscore years like a king; David, for his seven years' banishment, had a glorious reign of forty years' continuance; Daniel, for his lying a few hours among the lions, is made chief president over a hundred and twenty princes; the three children, for taking a few turns in the fiery furnace, are advanced to great dignity and glory. Ah! doubting souls, pray hard, pull hard, work hard for assurance; the pay will answer the pains. Christ will, sooner or later, say to thee, as the king of Israel said to the king of Syria, 'I am thine, and all that I have,' 1 Kings xx. 4. I am thine, O doubting souls, says Christ, and

[1] It is a true maxim, He finds his enemy strong at a dear rate, who contemns him as weak.

[2] *Hujusmodi lucri dulcis odor*, the smell of this gain is sweet to many; then what is assurance itself? &c.

assurance is thine, and joy is thine; my merit is thine, my Spirit is thine, and my glory is thine; all I am is thine, and all I have is thine. Oh this is *alvearium divini mellis*, an hive full of divine comfort; oh this will recompense thee for all thy wrestling and sweating to obtain assurance, Mat. xxv. 34–41; Rev. iii. 11, 12.

Augustine, in his Confessions, hath this notable expression, 'How sweet was it to me of a sudden to be without those sweet vanities; and those things which I was afraid to lose with joy I let go, for thou who art the true and only sweetness, didst cast out those from me, and instead of them didst enter in thyself, who art more delightful than all pleasure, and more clear than all light.[1] Ah! Christians, do but hold up and hold on, and assurance and joy will come, and thou shalt, after thy working and waiting, sit down and sing it out with old Simeon, 'Mine eyes have seen thy salvation;' my heart hath found the sweetness of assurance, and 'now, Lord, let thy servant depart in peace,' Luke ii. 30.

(6.) *The sixth motive* to provoke you to get assurance, is this, Consider *what labour and pains worldlings take to make sure the things of this life to them and theirs.*[2] Ah! what riding, running, plotting, lying, swearing, stabbing, and poisoning is used by men of this world, to make sure the poor things of this world, that are but shadows and dreams, and mere nothings! How do many with Samson lay heap upon heap, to make their crowns and kingdoms sure, to make the tottering glory of this world sure to themselves! what bloody butchers do they prove! they will have the crown, though they swim to it through blood. Men will venture life and limb to make sure these things that hop from man to man, as the bird hops from twig to twig. Oh! how should this stir and provoke us to be up and doing, to labour as for life, to make sure spiritual and eternal things! Is earth better than heaven? Is the glory of this world greater than the glory of the world to come? Are these riches more durable than those that corrupt not, that 'are laid up in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal?' Mat. vi. 19, 20. No. Oh then be ashamed, Christians, that worldlings are more studious and industrious to make sure pebbles, than you are to make sure pearls; to make sure those things that at last will be their burden, their bane, their plague, their hell, than you are to make sure those things that would be your joy and crown in life, in death, and in the day of your account.[3]

Pambus,[4] in the ecclesiastical history, wept when he saw a harlot dressed with much care and cost, partly to see one take so much pains to go to hell, and partly because he had not been so careful to please God, as she had been to please a wanton lover. Ah, Christians! what great reason have you to sit down and weep bitterly, that worldlings take so much pains to make themselves miserable, and that you have taken no more pains to get assurance, to get a pardon in your bosoms, to get more of Christ into your hearts!

[1] Confessions, b. viii. *et alibi*.—G.

[2] Scripture and histories abound with instances of this kind, as all know that know anything of the one or of the other.

[3] The laborious, the active Christian, is tempted but by one devil; but the idle, slothful Christian, is tempted by all, saith one. It is very sad, when worldlings are a-reaping, that saints as to spirituals should be slumbering and sleeping.

[4] Qu. 'Bembus'?—G.

(7.) *The seventh motive* to provoke you to get assurance, is to consider, *That assurance will enable you to bear a burden without a burden*, as in Heb. x. 34, 'For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an everlasting substance.' Here you see that assurance of heavenly things makes these worthies patiently and joyfully bear a burden without a burden. So the apostles, knowing that they had 'a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, went through honour and dishonour, evil report and good report,' 2 Cor. v. 8, and vi. 8–11. They went through many weaknesses, sicknesses, wants, and deaths; they had nothing, and yet possessed all things; they had burden upon burden cast upon them by the churches, by false apostles, and by an uncharitable world, and yet they cheerfully bore all burdens without a burden, through the power of a well-grounded assurance.[1] Assurance makes heavy afflictions light, long afflictions short, bitter afflictions sweet, 2 Cor. iv. 16–18. Where a man wants assurance, there the shadow of a burden frights him, and the weight of the least burden sinks him. Such a man is still a-crying out, No man's burden to my burden; my burden is greater than others, my burden is heavier than others. The want of assurance oftentimes makes men's very mercies a burden, their comforts a burden, their relations a burden, yea, their very lives a burden unto them. Ah! Christians, you will never bear burdens without a burden, till you come to attain an assurance of better things. This will enable you to leap under the weight of any cross, to rejoice under the weight of any mountain, Job vii. 20. Assurance fits a man's heart to his condition, and when a man's heart is fitted to his condition, nothing proves a burden to him. Assurance of better things to come takes away the sting, the poison that attends these lower things; and the sting and the poison being taken away, the very worst of these things are so far from being a burden to a man, that they become rather a pleasure and a delight unto him. When the sting is taken out of this or that venomous creature, a man may play with it and put it in his bosom.[2] Ah! assurance pulls out the sting that is in every cross, loss, &c., and this makes the assured soul to sit down singing, when others under far less crosses and losses, sit down sighing, mourning, and complaining, Our burdens are greater than we are able to bear. If there were but more assurance of better things among Christians, there would be less complaints among them of this burden, and that mole-hills then would be no longer mountains. Christians, it is not new notions, new opinions, new nothings, as I may say, in your heads, but the gaining of a well-grounded assurance in your hearts, that will enable you to bear all kinds of burdens without a burden.

(8.) *The eighth motive* to provoke you to get assurance, is drawn from *those particular commands of God, whereby he engages Christians to get assurance*,[3] as that in 2 Peter i. 10, 'Wherefore the rather,

[1] So Moses, and all those worthies in the 11th chapter.

[2] I have read of Albas Paulus, who handled serpents and scorpions, and cut them in pieces without any hurt, and said, If a man be holy, all things are subject to him as to Adam, before his sin in paradise. Surely assurance will enable a man to do much this way.

[3] The saints in heaven have *felix necessitas*, an happy necessity of obeying God alway; but we *infelix necessitas*, an unhappy necessity of disobeying continually.

brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things ye shall never fall.' So 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 'Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates or unapproved,' as the Greek imports. So Heb. vi. 11, 'And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end.' Ah! you dull, doubting, drowsy Christians, you should take all these commands of God, and press them with all the power and authority you can upon your hearts, to awaken them and provoke them to get assurance of your eternal well-being.[1] Take one command, and charge that upon the heart; if the heart be stout and will not yield, then take another command, and press it upon your heart; if that will not do, then take another, and lay that home upon the heart; and never leave this work till your souls be effectually stirred up to labour for assurance with all your might. Christians! you should tell your souls that the commands of God bind directly and immediately, that they bind absolutely and universally. You must obey God *intuitu voluntatis*, upon the bare sight of his will, and in one thing as well as another. Christians! if I am not much mistaken, you should make as much conscience of those commands of God that require you to get assurance of your future happiness, as you do of those commands that requires you to pray, to hear, &c. It is very sad to consider that many that complain much of the want of assurance, should make no more care and conscience of those commands of God that require them to get assurance than some of the heathens have done of the commands of their gods; who, when they have called for a man, have offered a candle; or as Hercules, who offered a painted man instead of a living. Verily, Christians! while you make light of any of God's commands, God will make as light of your comforts. Did you make more conscience to act answerable to the forementioned commands, I am very apt to believe that the Sun of righteousness would certainly and speedily cause his love and glory to beam out upon you. Mind God's commands more than your own wants and complaints, and light will break in upon you. By obeying Christ's commands, you will gain more than you can give; by kissing the Son, you will even command him, and make him and assurance yours.

(9.) *The ninth motive* to provoke you to get assurance is this, *You cannot gratify Satan more, nor injure yourselves more, than by living without assurance.* By living without assurance, you lay yourselves open to all Satan's snares and temptations; yea, you do instigate and provoke Satan to tempt you to the worst of sins, to tempt you to the greatest neglects, to tempt you to the strangest shifts, and to reduce you to the saddest straits. Ah, Christians! in what, in what hath Satan so gratified you, that you should thus gratify him? Hath he not robbed you of your glory in innocency? Hath he not kept your souls and your Saviour long asunder? When with Joshua you have been standing before

[1] The precepts of God, saith Lactantius, do so change the whole man, and make him new, that you can hardly know him to be the same.—Lactantius, *De Falsa Sapient*, lib. iii. cap. 27: a thing which philosophy hath much laboured in, but could never achieve. Christians! the pressing of those very commands last cited upon your hearts, may produce that comfort and peace, and make such a blessed change in your inward condition, as may bespeak much admiration.

the Lord, Zech. iii. 1, 2, hath not he stood at your right hand as an adversary to resist you? Hath he not often set the glory of the world before you, that he might bewitch you and ensnare you? Mat. iv. 8. Hath he not often cast water upon those divine motions that have been kindled in you? Have you not often found him a lion and a serpent, a tempter and a deceiver, a liar and a murderer? 1 Thes. ii. 18. Yes. Oh, then, never gratify him any longer by living without assurance. He that lives without assurance, lives without a comfortable fruition of God, and so gratifies Satan. He that lives without assurance, lives upon some creature enjoyment more than upon God, and so gratifies Satan. He that lives without assurance, lives not like the beloved of God, and so gratifies Satan. He that lives without assurance is very apt to gratify Satan, sometimes by complying with him, sometimes by following after him, and sometimes by acting his part for him, &c. Verily, Christians! there is no way effectually to prevent this sore evil, but by getting a well-grounded assurance of your everlasting happiness and blessedness. Assurance will make a man stand upon terms of defiance with Satan, it will make the soul constant in resisting, and happy in overcoming, the evil one. An assured soul will fight it out to the death with Satan; an assured soul will not fly like a coward, but will stand and triumph like a David.

And as you gratify Satan by living without assurance, so you wrong your own souls by living without assurance.

(1.) In the point of comfort and joy, you wrong your own souls.

(2.) In the point of peace and content, you wrong your own souls.

(3.) In the point of boldness and confidence, you wrong your own souls.

A man that lives without assurance, lays his precious soul open to many blows and knocks, to many frowns and wounds, from God, from the world, from carnal friends, from hypocrites, and from Satan; therefore as you would not, Christians, gratify Satan, and wrong your own souls, and exercise over yourselves spiritual cruelty and tyranny, which is the very worst of all cruelty and tyranny,[1] give God no rest till he hath made known to you the sweetness of his love, and the secrets of his bosom, till he hath gathered you up into himself, till he hath set you as 'a seal upon his heart, as a seal upon his arm,' Cant. viii. 6.

(10.) *The tenth motive*, to provoke you to get a well-grounded assurance is this, Consider *the sweet profit and glorious advantage that will redound to you by gaining assurance;* and if the gain that will certainly redound to you by assurance will not provoke you to get assurance, I know not what will.

[1.] *The first advantage. It will bring down heaven into your bosoms; it will give you a possession of heaven, on this side heaven,* Heb. xi. 1. An assured soul lives in paradise, and walks in paradise, and works in paradise, and rests in paradise; he hath heaven within him, and heaven about him, and heaven over him; all his language is Heaven, heaven! Glory, glory!

[2.] *The second advantage. Assurance will exceedingly sweeten all the changes of this life.* This life is full of changes. Assurance will sweeten sickness and health, weakness and strength, wants and

[1] *Rapit animam suam*, he plundereth his own soul.

abundance, disgrace and honour, 2 Cor. iv. 16–18, &c. While a man lives in the sense of unchangeable loves, no outward changes can make any considerable change in his spirit. Let times change, let men change, let powers change, let nations change, yet a man under the power of assurance will not change his countenance, nor change his master, nor change his work, nor change his hopes. Though others under changes turn, like the chameléon, into all colours to save their little all, yet the assured soul under all changes is *semper idem*, always the same.[1]

Antistines, a philosopher,[2] to make his life happy, desired only that he might have the spirit of Socrates, who was always in a quiet temper of spirit, whatever wrongs, injuries, crosses, losses, &c., befell him. Let the trials be what they would that did attend him, yet he continued one and the same. Ah, Christians! the want of assurance hath made many changelings in these days; but if ever you would be like Socrates, if ever you would be like the philosopher's good man, that is, τετράγωνος, *Tetragonos*, four square, that cast him where you will, like a die, he falls always sure and square, then get assurance of everlasting happiness.

Assurance will make your souls like the laws of the Medes and Persians, that alter not; it will sweeten the darkest day, and the longest night; under variety of changes, it will make a man sit down with Habakkuk, and rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation, Hab. iii. 17–19.

[3.] *The third advantage. Assurance will keep the heart from an inordinate running out after the world, and the glory thereof.* Moses having an assurance of the recompence of reward, and of his love and favour that is invisible, could not be drawn by all the honours, pleasures, and treasures of Egypt. He slights all, and tramples upon all the glory of the world, as men trample upon things of no worth, Heb. xi. 24–27. So after Paul had been in the third heaven, and had assurance that nothing should separate him from the love of God in Christ, he looks upon the world as a crucified thing: 'The world is crucified to me,' saith he, 2 Cor. xii. 1–3, and Rom. viii. 38; 'and I am crucified unto the world,' Gal. vi. 14. The world is dead to me, and I am dead to it: the world and I am well agreed; the world cares not a pin for me, and I care not a pin for the world.

The loadstone cannot draw the iron when the diamond is in presence; no more cannot the vanities of this world draw the soul after them, when assurance, that choice pearl of price, is in presence.

I have read of Lazarus, that after he was raised from the grave, he was never seen to smile. The assurance that he had of more glorious things, did deaden his heart to the things of this world; he saw nothing in them worthy of a smile. Ah! were there more assurance among Christians, there would not be such tugging for the world, and such greedy hunting and pursuing after it, as is in these days, to the dishonour of God, the reproach of Christ, and the shame of the gospel.

[1] Souls that want assurance are like him in Æsop, that blew hot and cold with the same breath. The wind is not more subject to change and shift from one quarter to another, from one corner to another, than they are subject to change and shift in changing times.

[2] Antisthenes. Cf. Plato, Phædo, sec. 59, and Diog. Laert. vi. 10.—G.

Get but more assurance, and less money will serve your turns; get but more assurance, and less places of honour and profit will serve your turns; get but assurance, and then you will neither transgress for a morsel of bread, nor yet violently pursue after the golden wedge, &c.[1]

[4.] *The fourth advantage. Assurance will exceedingly heighten you in your communion with God, and it will exceedingly sweeten your communion with God.* Assurance of a man's propriety in God raises him high in his fellowship with God, 1 John iii. 2. There are none that have such choice and sweet communion with God as those that have the clearest assurance of their interest in God, as may be seen throughout the whole book of Solomon's Song. 'My beloved is mine, and I am his,' saith the spouse, Cant. ii. 16. I am assured of my propriety in him, says she, and therefore he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts; and upon this account it is that she holds king Jesus in the galleries, that she is sick of love, that she is raised and ravished with his kisses and embraces: 'His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me,' chaps. i. 13, vii. 5, ii. 6. None had more assurance of her interest in Christ than she, and none higher and closer in communion with Christ than she. The wife's assurance of her interest in her husband, sweetens and heightens her communion with her husband. The child's assurance of his interest in his father, sweetens his commerce and fellowship with his father. So the believer's assurance of his interest in God, will exceedingly heighten and sweeten his communion and fellowship with God. Assurance of a man's interest in God sweetens every thought of God, and every sight of God, and every taste of God, and every good word of God. God is as sweet to the assured soul when he hath a sword in his hand as when he hath a sceptre; when he hath the rod of indignation as when he hath the cup of consolation; when his garments are rolled and dyed in blood as when he appears in his wedding robes; when he acts the part of a judge as when he acts the part of a father, &c.[2]

[5.] *The fifth advantage. Assurance will be a choice preservative to keep you from backsliding from God and his ways.* Ah! assurance will glue the soul to God and his ways, as Ruth was glued to her mother Naomi. It will make a man 'stand fast in the faith, and quit himself like a good soldier of Christ,' Gal. v. 1, 2 Tim. ii. 3. 2 Peter i. 10, 11, 'Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.' Stumble ye may, and he that does but stumble gets ground by his stumbling. Assurance will keep a man from falling foully and from falling utterly. Verily, the reason why there is so many apostates in these days is, because there are so few that have a well-grounded assurance in these days.[3]

[1] So when God gave Galeacius, that Italian marquis, an assurance of everlasting happiness, he withstood many golden temptations, and cried out, Cursed be he that prefers all the glory of the world to one day's communion with Christ, &c. Justice would not be sold and bought, as it is in these days, were there more assurance in the world.

[2] *Habet omnia qui habet habentem omnia*, he hath all that hath the owner of all.

[3] Luther, writing to his friend Melancthon, troubled with fears, saith, *Si nos ruimus ruit et Christus*, if we fall, saith he, Christ falls. *Pulchrior in prælio occisus miles quam fugâ salvus*, better be slain in the bed of honour, than be safe by running away. [Correspondence during Diet of Augsburg.—G.]

Pliny speaks of some fishes that swim backward.[1] Ah! many professors in these days swim backward; they swim from God, and Christ, and conscience; yea, they swim from the very principles of morality and common honesty. Believe it, friends! it is not high notions in the brain, but sound assurance in the heart, that will keep a man close to Christ when others backslide from Christ. An assured Christian will not exchange his gold for copper; he knows that one old piece of gold is worth a thousand new counters; one old truth of Christ is worth a thousand new errors, though clothed with glistering robes; and therefore he will prize the truth, and own the truth, and keep close to the truth, when others that want a sound assurance make merchandise of Christ, precious truths, and of their own and others' immortal souls. Get assurance, and thou wilt stand when seeming cedars fall; want assurance, and thou canst not but fall, to the breaking of thy bones, if not to the utter loss of thy precious soul, 2 Peter ii. 3.

[6.] *The sixth advantage. Assurance will very much embolden the soul with God.* It will make a man divinely familiar with God; it will make a man knock boldly at the door of free grace; it will make a man come boldly before the mercy-seat; it will make a man enter boldly within the holy of holies. Heb. x. 22, 'Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance[2] of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.' Assurance makes the soul top and top-gallant; it makes the soul converse with God as a favourite with his prince, as a bride with her bridegroom, as a Joseph with a Jacob.

Luther, under the power of assurance, lets fall this transcendent rapture of a daring faith, *Fiat mea voluntas*, let my will be done; and then falls off sweetly, *Mea voluntas, Domine, quia tua*, my will, Lord, because thy will. It is the want of assurance that makes the countenance sad, the hands hang down, the knees feeble, and the heart full of fears and tremblings, Heb. xii. 12. Oh therefore get assurance, and that will scatter your fears, and raise your hopes, and cheer your spirits, and give wings to faith, and make you humbly bold with God. You will not then stand at the door of mercy with a *may I knock?* with a *may I go in?* with a *may I find audience and acceptance?* but you will, with Esther, boldly adventure yourselves upon the mercy and goodness of God. 'Now verily, I think,' saith one, speaking of Christ, 'he cannot despise me, who is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; for if he neglect me as a brother, yet he will love me as a husband: that is my comfort.' Assurance will remove all strangeness from between Christ and the soul; of two, it will make Christ and the soul one.

[7.] *The seventh advantage. Assurance will sweeten the thoughts of death, and all the aches, pains, weaknesses, sicknesses, and diseases, that are the fore-runners of it; yea, it will make a man look and long for that day.*[3] It will make a man sick of his absence from Christ. It makes a man smile upon the king of terrors; it makes a man laugh at the shaking of the spear, at the noise of the battle, at the garments of

[1] Nat. Hist., lib. ix. c. 37.

[2] πληροφορίᾳ. Such full assurance as fills all the sails of the soul.

[3] *Nemo ante funera felix*,—Solon. Nazianzen said of the king of terrors, Devour me, devour me. Death cures all diseases, the aching head, and the unbelieving heart.

the warriors rolled in blood. It made the martyrs to compliment with lions, to dare and tire their persecutors, to kiss the stake, to sing and clap their hands in the flames, to tread upon hot burning coals, as upon beds of roses.[1]

The assured soul knows that death shall be the funeral of all his sins and sorrows, of all afflictions and temptations, of all desertions and oppositions. He knows that death shall be the resurrection of his joys; he knows that death is both an outlet and an inlet; an outlet to sin, and an inlet to the soul's clear, full, and constant enjoyment of God; and this makes the assured soul to sing it sweetly out, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 'I desire to be dissolved.' 'Make haste, my beloved.' 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.'[2] Now death is more desirable than life. Now says the soul, *Ejus est timere mortem, qui ad Christum nolit ire,* let him fear death that is loath to go to Christ. So I may be with Christ, though I go in a cloud, I care not, says the assured soul; so I may be with Christ, I care not though I go in a fiery chariot, says the assured soul.

The Persians had a certain day in the year, in which they used to kill all serpents and venomous creatures. The assured Christian knows, that the day of death will be such a day to him, and that makes death lovely and desirable. He knows that sin was the midwife that brought death into the world, and that death shall be the grave to bury sin; and therefore death is not a terror, but a delight unto him.[3] He fears it not as an enemy, but welcomes it as a friend; as crook-back Richard the Third in his distress cried, 'A kingdom for a horse, a kingdom for a horse!'[4] So souls that want assurance, when they come to die, will cry out, A kindgom for assurance, a kingdom for assurance! and as Severus said, 'If I had a thousand worlds, I would now give them all for Christ.'[5] So a soul that wants assurance, when he comes to enter upon a state of eternity, will cry out, Oh, had I now a thousand worlds, I would give them all for assurance, whereas the assured soul would not for a thousand worlds but die. When his glass is out, and his sun is set, he cries not out, as that lady did,[6] 'A world, a world for an inch of time!' but rather, Why is it, why is it, Lord, that thy chariots be so long a-coming?[7]

[8.] *The eighth advantage. Assurance will very much sweeten that little oil that is in the cruse, and that handful of meal that is in the barrel,'* 1 Kings xvii. 12, &c. Assurance will be sauce to all meats, it will make all thy mercies to taste like mercies. It will make Daniel's pulse to be as sweet as princes' delicates, Daniel i. 8, 12. It will make Lazarus's rags as pleasurable as Dives's robes, Luke xvi. 20. It will make Jacob's bed upon the stones, to be as soft as those beds of down and ivory, that sinful great ones stretch themselves upon, Gen. xxviii. 18; Amos vi. 4.

[1] *Ultimus morborum medicus mors.*
[2] 1 Cor. xv. 55–57; Philip. i. 23; Cant. viii. 14; Rev. xxii. 20.
[3] *Morimur dum non morimur.*
[4] See Index under Richard III. for former quotation and note.—G.
[5] Query, Serenus, martyr.—G.
[6] Queen Elizabeth. See Index under Elizabeth.—G.
[7] Ambrose said to his friends about him, when he was dying, I have not so lived that I am ashamed to live; nor yet fear I death, because I have a good Lord, &c.

Look, as the want of assurance embitters all a sinner's mercies, that he cannot taste the sweetness and goodness of them; so the enjoyment of assurance casts a general beauty and glory upon the believer's meanest mercy. And hence it is, that assured souls live so sweetly, and walk so cheerfully, when their little all is upon their backs and in their hands; whereas the great men of the world, that have the world at will, but want this assurance, that is more worth than the world, live as slaves and servants to these mercies, Job xx. 22. In the midst of all their abundance they are in straits and perplexities, full of fears and cares; nothing pleases them, nor is sweet unto them, because they want that assurance that sweetens to a believer the ground they stand on, the air he breathes, the seat he sits on, the bread he eats, the clothes he wears, &c. Ah! were there more assurance among Christians, they would not count great mercies small mercies, and small mercies no mercies; no, no; then every mercy on this side hell would be a great mercy, then every mercy would be a sugared mercy, a perfumed mercy. Look, as the tree that Moses cast into the waters of Marah made those bitter waters sweet, Exod. xv. 23–25, so assurance is that tree of life that makes every bitter sweet, and every sweet more sweet.[1]

(9.) *The ninth advantage. Assurance will make a man very angelical.*[2] It will make him full of motion, full of action; it will make him imitate the angels, those princes of glory, that are always busy and active to advance the glory of Christ. They are still a-singing the song of the Lamb; they are still pitching their tents about them that fear the Lord, Ps. xxxiv. 7; they are ministering spirits sent forth for the good of them that are heirs of salvation, Heb. i. 14. Assurance will make a man fervent, constant, and abundant in the work of the Lord, as you may see in Paul. The assured Christian is more motion than notion, more work than word, more life than lip, more hand than tongue. When he hath done one work, he is a-calling out for another; What is the next, Lord, says the assured soul, what is the next? His head and his heart is set upon his work, and what he doth, he doth it with all his might, because there is no working in the grave.[3] An assured Christian will put his hand to any work; he will put his shoulder to any burden; he will put his neck in any yoke for Christ; he never thinks that he hath done enough, he always thinks that he hath done too little; and when he hath done all he can, he sits down sighing it out, 'I am but an unprofitable servant.'[4]

In a word, assurance will have a powerful influence upon thy heart. In all the duties and services of religion, nothing will make a man love like this and live like this; nothing will make a man humble and thankful, contented and cheerful, like this. Nothing will make a man more serious in prayer, nor ingenuous in praises, than this; nothing will

[1] A believer knows, (1.) that his little mercies are from great love; (2.) that they are pledges of greater; (3.) that his blessings are blessed unto him: (4.) that they shall not at last be witnesses against him.

[2] The Rabbins say, that the angels attend in all judicatories.

[3] Assurance makes a saint all fire; it makes him like the burning seraphims, Isa. vi. 2–4.

[4] Bellarmine is of opinion that one glimpse of hell were enough to make a man not only turn Christian, but a monk, to live after the strictest rules, to be abounding in well-doing. Surely assurance of heaven will make a man do more.

make a man more cheerful and joyful than this; nothing will make a man fit to live and more willing to die, than this.

Ah, Christians! if ever you would act as angels in this world, get an assurance of another world; then you shall be dumb no more, nor dull no more, but be active and lively, like those whose hopes and whose hearts are in heaven.

(10.) *The tenth advantage. Assurance will sweeten Christ, and the precious things of Christ, to thy soul.*[1] Ah! how sweet is the person of Christ, the natures of Christ, the aims of Christ, the offices of Christ, the benefits of Christ, the blood of Christ, the word of Christ, the threatenings of Christ, the Spirit of Christ, the ordinances of Christ, the smiles of Christ, the kisses of Christ, to an assured soul. Now thy meditations on Christ will be no more a terror, nor a horror to thee; nay, now thy heart will be always best, when you are most in pondering upon the sweetness and goodness, the kindness and loveliness, of the Lord Jesus. Now all the institutions and adminstrations of Christ will be precious to thee. Upon everything where Christ hath set his name, there thou wilt set thy heart. Now thou wilt call things as Christ calls them, and count things as Christ counts them; that shall not be little in thy eye, that is great in the eye of Christ; nor that shall not be great in thy eye that is but little in the eye of Christ.[2]

Assurance will also exceedingly sweeten your carriage to all that bear the image of Christ. Nothing will make men bear with those weak saints whose light is not so clear as yours, whose parts are not so strong as yours, whose enjoyments are not so high as yours, whose judgments are not so well informed as yours, whose consciences are not so well satisfied as yours, and whose lives are not so amiable as yours.

Assurance makes men of a God-like disposition, easy to pardon, ready to forgive, abundant in goodness, admirable in patience. It makes men to study the good of others, and joy in all opportunities wherein they may strengthen the feeble, and comfort the dejected, and enrich the impoverished, and recover the seduced, and enlarge the straitened, and build up the wasted. Verily, the reason why men are so bitter and sour, and censorious, is because God hath not given into their bosoms this sweet flower of delight, assurance.[3]

Ah! were their souls fully assured that God had loved them freely, and received them graciously, and justified them perfectly, and pardoned them absolutely, and would glorify them everlastingly, they could not but love where God loves, and own where God owns, and embrace where God embraces, and be one with every one that is one with Jesus. Were there more assurance among Christians, there would be more of David's and Jonathan's spirit among Christians, than there is this day.

Were there more assurance among Christians, there would be more life and more love, more sweetness and more tenderness. Were there

[1] *Ipse Deus sufficit ad præmium*—Bernard. It is heaven enough to see your interest in Christ.

[2] Assurance is like fire, very operative. *Si non operatur non est*, if it do not work, it is an argument it is not at all.

[3] Rom. xv. 1. We are united in the same head and hope, *eodem sanguine Christi glutinari*, we are cemented with the same blood of Christ, as Augustine said of his friend Alypius and himself. [Epist., *sub nomine*.—G.]

more assurance, there would be less noise, less contention, less division, less distraction, less biting, and less devouring among the saints.[1]

Assurance will make the lion and the calf, the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, the bear and the cow, lie down together, and feed together, Isa. xi. 6–8. Men that want assurance love their brethren as flies love the pot. So long as there is any meat in the pot, the flies love it; so those men will love as long as there is an external motive to draw love, but when that ceases, their love ceases.

Dionysius loved his bottles when they were full, but hurled them away when they were empty. So many that want assurance love the saints while their bags are full, and their houses full of the good things of this life; but when they are empty, then they throw them away, then they cast them off, as Job's friends did him.

Ah! but assurance will make a man love as God loves, and love as long as God loves. The assured Christian will not cease to love so long as the least buds and blossoms of grace appear. Lazarus in his rags is as lovely to an assured Christian as Solomon in his robes. Job is as delightful to him upon the dunghill as David is upon his throne. It is not the outward pomp and bravery, but the inward beauty and glory of saints that takes the assured Christian.

(11.) *The eleventh motive* to provoke you to get a well-grounded assurance of your everlasting happiness is this, consider *that as there is a great deal of counterfeit knowledge, counterfeit faith, counterfeit love, counterfeit repentance, &c. in the world, so there is a great deal of counterfeit assurance in the world.* Many there be that talk high, and look big, and bear it out bravely that they are thus and thus, and that they have such and such glorious assurance, whereas, when their assurance comes to be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, it is found too light; and when it comes to withstand temptations, it is found too weak; and when it should put the soul upon divine action, it is found to be but a lazy presumption. Shall the counterfeit gold that is in the world make men active and diligent to get that which is current, and that will abide the touchstone and the fire? and shall not that counterfeit assurance that is in the world provoke your hearts to be so much the more careful and active to get such a well-grounded assurance that God accounts as current, and that will abide his touchstone in the day of discovery, and that will keep a man from shame and blushing when the thrones shall be set and the books shall be opened?

I have been the longer upon these motives to provoke your souls to get a well-grounded assurance, because it is of an eternal concernment to you, and a work to which men's hearts are too backward.

Though assurance carries a reward in its own bosom, yet few look after it; though the pains of getting it be nothing to the profit that accompanies it, yet few will sweat to gain it.

If the inducements laid down will not awaken and provoke you to be restless till you have got the 'white stone' and 'new name,' till you have got the assurance of your pardon in your bosoms, I know not what will.

[1] *Magnes amoris est amor*, love is the attractive loadstone of love.

CHAPTER V.

Shewing the several ways and means of gaining a well-grounded assurance.

(1.) *The first means.* If ever you will attain to assurance, then *be much in the exercise and actings of grace.* As the believing Ephesians, Eph. i. 13, were in the very exercise and actings of grace, the Spirit of the Lord 'sealed them up to the day of redemption.' Assurance flows in upon the actings of grace. Assurance is bred and fed, it is raised and maintained in the soul, by the actings of grace. Grace is most discernible when it is most in action, and grace is made more and more perfect by acting. Neglect of your graces is the ground of their decrease. Wells are the sweeter for drawing; you get nothing by dead and useless habits; talents hid in a napkin gather rust; the noblest faculties are embased when not improved; grace in the habit is no more discernible than fire under the ashes, than gold in the ore, than a dead man in the grave; but grace, in its lively actings and operations, is as a prince upon his throne, sparkling and shining.[1]

Ah, Christians! were your grace more active, it would be more visible; and were your grace more visible, your assurance would be more clear and full. As St Paul once spake to Timothy, 'Stir up the gift of God that is in thee,'[2] 2 Tim. i. 6, so say I to you, If ever you would have assurance, stir up the grace of God that is in you, blow up that heavenly fire, raise up those noble spirits, never cease believing nor repenting, till it be clearly given into your bosoms, that you are sure that you do believe, and that you do repent, as you are sure that you live, as you are sure that God rules in Jacob, and dwells in Zion.

Remember, Christians, all the honour that God hath from you in this life, is from the actings and exercise of your grace, and not from the habits of grace. Remember, Christians, that all your consolations flow, not from the habits, but from the acts of grace. Remember, Christians, that the want of the exercise of grace is the reason why you do not discern your grace, and why you have no more assurance of your future happiness. He that will be rich, must still be turning the penny; and he that will attain unto the riches of assurance, must still be acting his graces, Col. ii. 2. There are none but lively, active Christians, that know and feel those joys, comforts, and contents that attend the exercise of grace. If thou wouldst not be always a babe in grace, and a stranger to assurance, then see that thy lamp be always burning, see that thy golden wheels of grace be always going.

(2.) *The second means.* If you would, Christians, attain unto assurance, then *you must mind your work more than your wages; you must be better at obeying than disputing; at doing, at walking, than at talking and wrangling.*[3] Assurance is heavenly wages that Christ

[1] A Christian that would have assurance, must never leave blowing his little spark till he hath blowed it into a flame.

[2] The words are an allusion to the fire in the temple, which was always to be kept burning. *Vide* Calvin on the text.

[3] *Non enim passibus ad Deum sed affectibus currimus. Ambulas si amas*, thou walkest if thou lovest to walk.

gives, not to loiterers, but to holy labourers. Though no man merits assurance by his obedience, yet God usually crowns obedience with assurance. John xiv. 21–23, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him (not Iscariot), Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If any man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' In these words you see, that doing Christians, working Christians, are the only Christians that shall have most of the love of the Father and the Son, and that shall have the choicest manifestations of grace and favour, and that shall have most of their presence and company. So in Ps. l. 23, 'Unto him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I declare the salvation of God.'[1] That is, I will declare myself to be his Saviour, I will shew him salvation, and I will shew him his interest in salvation; I will save him, and I will make him see that I have saved him. He shall see the worth of salvation, and test the sweetness of salvation. So Gal. vi. 16, 'And as many as walk according to this rule' (that is, the rule of the new creature), 'peace be on them, and mercy upon the Israel of God.' The Greek word that is here rendered '*walk*,' signifies not simply to walk, but to walk by rule, in order, and measure, without treading aside, but making straight steps to our feet.[2] Now those choice souls that thus walk according to the law of the new creature, shall have peace and mercy in them, and peace and mercy with them, and peace and mercy on them. 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be on them.' Assurance is a jewel of too high a price to be cast into any of their bosoms that walk contrary to the laws of the new creature. Such may talk of assurance, and make a stir and a noise about assurance, but it is the close walking Christian that shall be crowned with assurance. Assurance is a choice part of a believer's happiness, and therefore God will never give it out of a way of holiness. 'The Lord hath set apart for himself the man that is godly,' Ps. iv. 3. None are favourites in God's court, nor none are admitted to be of his counsel, but those who are all glorious within, and whose raiment is of embroidered gold. That is, such whose principles are full of spiritual glory, and whose practices are amiable and answerable in purity and sanctity. These are the persons that shall have the honour to have God's ear, and the happiness to know his heart.[3]

(3.) *The third means.* To gain assurance, is *to be kind to the Spirit, hear his voice, follow his counsel, live up to his laws.* The Spirit is the great revealer of the Father's secrets, he lies in the bosom of the Father, he knows every name that is written in the book of life; he is best acquainted with the inward workings of the heart of God towards poor sinners; he is the great comforter, and the only sealer up of souls to the day of redemption.[4] If you set him a-mourning by your wilful

[1] ושם דרך, that disposeth his way, as God hath prescribed.

[2] στοιχήσουσιν. *Vide* Bezam and Pareus on the text.

[3] *Vis nunquam esse tristis? Bene vive*, wouldst thou never be sad? Then live well, says Bernard.

[4] Rom. viii. 26; John xiv. 26: Eph. i. 13.

sinnings, that alone can glad you, by whom will you be gladded? Verily, Christians, when you turn your back upon the Spirit, he will not turn his face upon your souls. Your vexing of the Spirit will be but the disquieting of yourselves, Isa. lxiii. 10. Look, as all lights cannot make up the want of the light of the sun, so all creatures cannot make up the want of the testimony of the Spirit. Let me speak to you, as God once spake to his people in Exod. xxiii. 20-23, 'Behold, says God, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in thy way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him,' &c.[1] So say I, behold the Spirit of the Lord, that is your guide and guard, he also is only able to make a soul-satisfying report of the love and favour to you; therefore, as ever you would have assurance, beware of him and obey his voice, provoke him not; for if you do by wilful transgressions, he will neither comfort you nor counsel you; he will neither be a sealing nor a witnessing Spirit unto you; nay, he will raise storms and tempests in your souls; he will present to you the Father frowning, and your Saviour bleeding, and himself as grieving; and these sights will certainly rack and torture your doubting souls. The Spirit of the Lord is a delicate thing, a holy thing, a blessed guest, that makes every soul happy where he lodges. 'Therefore grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption,'[2] Eph. iv. 30. You will not grieve your guests, your friends, but courteously and friendly entertain them; why then do you make so little conscience of grieving that Holy Spirit that alone can stamp the image of the Father upon you, and seal you up to life and glory?

Ah, Christians! the way to assurance is not to sit down sighing and complaining of the want of assurance, but it lies in your eyeing of the Spirit, in your complying with the Spirit, in your cleaving to the Spirit, in your following of the Spirit, in your welcoming of the Spirit, and in your honouring and obeying of the Spirit. As he said of the sword of Goliah, 'None like to that,' 1 Sam. xxi. 9; so say I, no means like to this, to gain a well-grounded assurance of a man's happiness and blessedness. And as he said, 'If there be any way to heaven on horseback, it is by prayer;' so say I, if there be any way in the world to assurance, it is by being fearful to offend, and careful to please the Spirit of the Lord, whose office it is to witness to poor souls the remission of their sins, and the salvation of their souls.

(4.) *The fourth means.* If you would obtain assurance, then *be sincere, be diligent and constant in assuring ordinances.* He that will meet the king, must wait on him in his walks, Isa. lxiv. 5. Christ's ordinances are Christ's walks; and he that would see the beauty of Christ, and taste of the sweetness of Christ, and be ravished with the love of Christ, must wait at wisdom's door, they must attend Christ in his own appointments and institutions, Rev ii. 1; Prov. viii. 34, 35. That

[1] This angel is the Lord Jesus, as expositors do generally agree. מלאכי, *Malachi*, which Hebrew word is here rendered angel, is by transposition of letters Michael, as some of the Rabbins have observed.

[2] This phrase is tropically to be understood. The Greek cannot be fully expressed in our tongue, *τὸ πνεῦμα, τὸ ἅγιον, τοῦ θεοῦ*, *i. e.* the Spirit, the holy of that God. To shew the transcendent excellency and glory of the Holy Spirit.

comfort and assurance that flows not in through the golden pipes of the sanctuary, will not better the soul, nor long abide with the soul; it will be as the morning dew, and as the flowers of the field that soon fade away, Hosea vi. 4; 1 Peter i. 24.

I have in the former discourse shewed at large how the Lord is graciously pleased to cause his love and glory to beam forth upon souls in ordinances; and therefore I shall say no more unto this particular at this time.

(5.) *The fifth means* to obtain assurance is, *wisely and seriously to observe what gift of God there is in thee, that brings thee within the compass of the promises of eternal mercy.* Now, let the gift be this or that, if it be a gift that brings thee within the compass of the promise of eternal mercy, that gift is an infallible evidence of thy salvation.

For the better and further opening of this truth, premise with me these two things:

[1.] *First,* No man can have any sure evidence to himself of his happiness and blessedness from absolute promises.[1] Absolute promises do not describe to whom salvation and all eternal blessings do belong. The promise of giving Christ, of giving the Spirit, of giving a new heart, and of pardoning and blotting out sin, are all absolute promises. Now God is free to make good these to whom he pleases; therefore he often steps over the rich and chooses the poor; the learned, and chooses the ignorant; the strong, and chooses the weak; the noble, and chooses the ignoble; the sweet nature, and chooses the rugged nature, &c., that no flesh may glory, and that all may shout out Grace, grace! 1 Cor. i. 25–29.

[2.] *Secondly,* Though no man can have any sure evidence of his happiness and blessedness from absolute promises, because absolute promises do not describe the persons to whom salvation and all eternal blessings do belong; yet absolute promises are of most choice and singular use.

(1.) In that they discover to us that our salvation is only from free grace, and not from anything in us or done by us.

(2.) They are a most sure and glorious foundation for the very worst of sinners to stay their filthy, guilty, wearied, burdened, perplexed souls upon. Seeing that God looks not for any penny or pennyworth, for any portion or proportion in the creature to draw his love, but he will justify, pardon, and save for his name's sake, Isa. lv. 1, 2; seeing all the motives that move God to shew mercy are in his own bosom; seeing they are all within doors, there is no reason why the vilest of sinners should sit down and say, There is no hope, there is no help, Deut. vii. 7, 8; Ps. lxviii. 18.

[3.] *Thirdly,* Absolute promises may, and doubtless often are, choice cordials to many precious souls, who happily have lost the sense and feeling of divine favour. Absolute promises are waters of life to many precious sons of Sion. They are a heavenly fire at which they can sit down and warm themselves when they cannot blow their own spark into a flame, and when all candle-light, torch-light, and star-light fails

[1] Isa. xlii. 6, xlix. 8; Joel ii. 28; Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27; Jer. xxxii. 40; Heb. viii. 10–12; Isa. xxxii. 15.

them. When all other comforts can yield a perplexed, distressed soul no comfort, yet then absolute promises will prove full breasts of consolation to the distressed soul.[1]

These things being premised, see now what gift of God there is in thee that brings thee within the compass of the promise of everlasting happiness and blessedness; and to help you a little in this, I shall put you in mind of these following particulars.

1. *The first gift.* *Faith* is a gift of God that brings the soul within the promise of everlasting blessedness, as the Scripture doth everywhere evidence: 'He that believes shall be saved;' 'he that believes shall not come into condemnation;' 'he shall not perish;' 'he shall have eternal life,' &c.[2] Now believing is nothing else but the accepting of Christ for thy Lord and Saviour, as he is offered to thee in the gospel; and this accepting is principally, if not only, the act of thy will; so that if thou art sincerely and cordially willing to have Christ upon his own terms, upon gospel terms, that is, to save thee and rule thee, to redeem thee and to reign over thee, then thou art a believer. Thy sincere willingness to believe is thy faith; and this gift brings thee within the compass of the promise of eternal happiness and blessedness.

Christian reader, in the following discourse thou wilt find the nature, the properties, and the excellencies of a sound saving faith clearly and largely laid open before thee; and therefore I shall say no more to it in this place, but refer thee to what follows.

2. *The second gift.* *Waiting patiently on God* is a gift that brings thee within the promise of everlasting happiness and blessedness. And he that hath but a waiting frame of heart, hath that that God will eternally own and crown: Isa. xxx. 18, 'And therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted that he may have mercy upon you; for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.' Verily, it is no iniquity to pronounce them blessed that God pronounces blessed. It is no piety, but cruelty and inhumanity, for any not to be as merciful to themselves as God is merciful to them; not to have as sweet and precious thoughts of their present condition as God hath. If God says the waiting soul is blessed, who dares judge, who dares say it is not blessed? 'Let God be true, and every man a liar,' Rom. iii. 4; Isa. lxiv. 4, 'For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he [hath] prepared for him that waiteth for him'; Prov. viii. 34, 'Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, and waiting at the posts of my doors'; Isa. xlix. 23, 'They shall not be ashamed that wait for me'; that is, I will never fail the waiting soul; I will never put him to blushing by frustrating his patient waiting on me. The waiting soul shall bear the belt, and carry away the crown at last. Verily, glorious love and power is as much seen in keeping up a poor soul in a patient waiting on God, as it was in raising Christ from the grave, and as it is in bringing souls to glory. Nothing can make the waiting soul miserable. Hold out faith and

[1] Bilney was much comforted in a great conflict by that promise, 1 Tim. i. 15; and Ursine by that in John x. 29; another by that in Isa. lvii. 15; another by that in Isa. xxxi. 3; Mr Wheatley with that in Heb. x. 37, &c. [See Index, *sub nominibus*, for other references to these worthies.—G.]

[2] Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 15, 16, &c.; John i. 12.

patience but a little, 'and he that shall come will come, and bring his reward with him,' Rev. xxii. 11, 12.

3. *The third gift. Hungering and thirsting after righteousness* is a gift that brings the soul within the compass of the promise of everlasting happiness and blessedness: Mat. v. 6, 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled'; or as it runs in the Greek, 'Blessed are they that are hungering and thirsting,' πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες, intimating that wherever this is the present disposition of men's souls, they are blessed, and may expect spiritual repletions.

Considerable to this purpose is that of Isa. xliv. 2–5: 'Thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee: Fear not, O Jacob my servant; and thou, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring. And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shal. subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.'[1]

Of the like consideration is that of Isa. xxxv. 6, 7, 'Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break forth, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass, with reeds and rushes.'

To the like purpose is that in Ps. cvii. 9, 'For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.'

But that none may mistake nor miscarry in this business, that is of an eternal concernment to them, I shall desire them to premise with me these following things, for a better and fuller clearing of this particular truth that is under our present consideration.

First, Premise this with me: *All real hungerings and thirstings after righteousness are earnest and vehement thirstings and longings.* They are like Rachel's longing for children, and like Samson's longing for water: Ps. xlii. 1, 2, 'As the hart panteth after the water-brook, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?' Philosophers observe, that of all the beasts, the hart is most thirsty by nature, but most of all thirsty when she is hunted and pursued by dogs. Says David: As the hunted hart, as the wounded hart, yea, as the she-hart, in whom the passions of thirst are strongest, panteth after the water-brooks, so doth my soul pant after thee, O God. A gracious soul panteth and fainteth, it breatheth and breaketh, for the longing it hath at all times after the righteousness of Christ imputed and infused, Ps. cxix. 20. The Greeks derive their word for *desire* from a root that signifies to *burn.*[2] Ah, Christians! real desires are burning desires; they set the soul all in a holy flame after God and Christ. If they are

[1] By water is meant the Spirit, say some; others understand it of the spiritual waters of grace, that God will pour out upon those that thirst and long after an abundance of grace, &c.

[2] See Index under 'Desire.'—G.

not vehement, if they do not put an edge upon thy affections, if they do not make thee like a burning seraphim, Christ will take no pleasure in them; they shall return into thy own bosom without working any wonders in heaven, as those desires do that flow from the soul's being touched with a coal from the altar.

Secondly, Premise this with me, *All real hungerings in the soul after righteousness, arise from spiritual and heavenly considerations*;[1] they spring in the soul from some convictions, some apprehensions, some persuasions that the soul hath, of a real worth, of a real beauty, glory, and excellency that is in Christ, and in his righteousness, imputed and imparted. Such desires after righteousness that flow from external considerations, are of no worth, weight, or continuance, but those desires after righteousness that flow from spiritual considerations, are full of spirit, life, and glory; they are such that God will not only observe but accept, not only record but reward, Ps. cxlv. 19.

Thirdly, Real hungerings and thirstings after Christ and his righteousness, &c., will put the soul upon lively endeavours. If they are true-born desires, they will not make the soul idle but active; not negligent but diligent, in the use of all holy means, whereby the soul may enjoy Christ and his righteousness: Isa. xxvi. 9, 'With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early.' Real desires will make us earnest and early in seeking to obtain the thing desired, as the Hebrew word imports.[2] A thirsty man will not only long for drink, but labour for it; the condemned man will not only desire his pardon, but he will write, and entreat, and weep, and set this friend and that to solicit for him; the covetous man doth not only wish for wealth, but will rise early and go to bed late, he will turn every stone, and make attempts upon all hopeful opportunities, whereby he may fill his bags and fill his barns. Even so, all holy desires will put souls upon the use of the means, whereby the mercy desired may be gained. And thus to run, is to attain; thus to will, is to work; thus to desire, is to do the will of our Father, who accepts of pence for pounds, of mites for millions.

The Persian monarch was not so famous for accepting a little water from the hand of a loving subject, as our God is for accepting a handful of meal for a sacrifice, and a gripe[3] of goat's hair for an oblation; for accepting of that little we have, and for accounting our little much, Lev. ii. 2; Exod. xxxv. 6; 2 Cor. viii. 12.

Noah's sacrifice could not be great, and yet it was greatly accepted and highly accounted of by God. Such is God's condescending love to weak worms, that he looks more at their will than at their work; he minds more what they would do, than what they do do; he always prefers the willing mind before the worthiest work, and where desires and endeavours are sincere, there God judges such to be as good as they desire and endeavour to be.

Fourthly, Spiritual hungerings and thirstings are only satisfied with spiritual things. John xiv. 8, 'Shew us the Father, and it

[1] Ps. lxiii. 1–4, xxvii. 4; Philip. iii. 7–10.

[2] אשחרך from שחר, which signifies to seek in the morning, when it is but dim and dusky, scarce twilight; for of darkness it hath its name, and it notes both an earnest and an early seeking.

[3] See Glossary, *sub voce*.—G.

sufficeth us.' All things in the world cannot suffice us, but a sight of the Father, that will satisfy us: Ps. lxiii. 5, 6, 'My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips; when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches.' Ps. lxv. 4, 'We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.' It is only God, and the precious things of his house, that can satisfy a thirsty soul.[1]

It was a sweet saying of one, 'As what I have, if offered to thee, pleaseth thee not, O Lord, without myself; so the good things we have from thee, though they may refresh us, yet they cannot satisfy us, without thyself.' The rattle without the breast will not satisfy the child, the house without the husband will not satisfy the wife, the cabinet without the jewel will not satisfy the virgin, nor the world without Christ will not satisfy the soul.

Luther, in a time of wants, receiving unexpectedly a good sum of money from the elector of Germany, at which being somewhat amazed, he turned himself to God and protested, that God should not put him off with such poor low things.[2] The hungry soul will not be put off with any bread but with the bread of life; the thirsty soul will not be put off with any water but with the well-springs of life. As the king of Sodom said once, 'Take you the goods, give me the persons,' Gen. xiv. 21; so says the hungry soul, Take you the goods, take your honours, and riches, and the favour of creatures, take you the corn, the oil, and the wine; give me Christ, give me the light of his countenance, give me the joy of his Spirit, &c. Oh the answering of spiritual breathings is very sweet to the soul: Prov. xiii. 19, 'The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul.' Returns from heaven make a paradise in the soul.

I have read of Darius, that when he fled from his enemy, and being in great thirst, he met with a dirty puddle of water, with carrion lying in it, and he sucked in and drank very heartily of it, and professed, 'That it was the sweetest draught that ever he drunk in his life.'[3] Ah, how sweet then are those waters of life that be at God's right hand! How sweet are the droppings of God's honeycomb upon the hungry soul! Water out of the rock, and manna in the wilderness, was not so sweet to the hungry, thirsty Israelites, as spiritual answers and spiritual returns are to those that hunger and thirst after spiritual things.

(6.) *The sixth means* to obtain a well-grounded assurance of your everlasting happiness is, *to be much, yea, to excel in those choice particular things that may clearly and fully difference and distinguish you, not only from the profane, but also from the highest and most glistering hypocrites in all the world.*[4] It is nothing to be much in those duties and performances wherein the worst of sinners may equalize, yea, go beyond the best of saints. Oh! but to excel in those things that the most refined hypocrites cannot reach to, this cannot but much help

[1] *Christus est mihi pro omnibus*, saith one.

[2] *Valde protestatus sum, me nolle sic satiari ab eo.*—Luther.

[3] Quintus Curtius?—G.

[4] Many may be much in and for church ordinances, whose hearts are very carnal, and whose lives are very vain, Ezek. xxiv. 21, 32. You have seven expressions of carnal hearts prizing church privileges; so Jer. iv. 3; Ezek. xxxiii. 30–33; Isa. i. 11–14; Zech. vii. 4–7; Isa. lviii. 1–3, &c.

you on to assurance. He that hath those jewels in his bosom that God gives only to his choicest favourites, needs not question whether he be a favourite, &c. If he doth it, it is his sin, and will hereafter be his shame.

But you may say to me, What are those choice particular things that may difference and distinguish Christ's true Nathanaels from all other persons in the world?

Now, to this question I shall give these following answers:

[1.] *The first distinction.* A true Nathanael, in his constant course, *labours in all duties and services to be approved and accepted of God.* He is most studious and industrious to approve his heart to God in all that he puts his hand to. So David, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting,' Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.[1] So Peter approves his heart to Christ three several times together: 'Lord, thou knowest that I love thee; Lord, thou knowest that I love thee; Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee,' John xxi. 15–17. Thou knowest the sincerity and reality of my love, and therefore to thee I do appeal. To the same purpose the apostle speaks: 2 Cor. v. 9, 'Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.' The Greek word [φιλοτιμούμεθα] that is here rendered *labour*, is a very emphatical word; it signifies to labour and endeavour with all earnestness and might, to endeavour with a high and holy ambition to be accepted of God, judging it the greatest honour in the world to be owned and accepted of the Lord. Ambitious men are not more diligent, earnest, studious, and laborious to get honour among men, than we are, saith the apostle, to get acceptance with God. Ah! but your most refined hypocrites labour only to approve themselves to men in their praying, fasting, talking, hearing, giving, &c.[2] Let them have but man's eye to see them, and man's ear to hear them, and man's tongue to commend them, and man's hand to reward them, and they will sit down and bless themselves, saying it is enough; aha! so would we have it.

They say of the nightingale, that when she is solitary in the woods, she is careless of her note; but when she conceives that she hath any auditors, or is near houses, then she composes herself more quaintly and elegantly. Verily, this is the frame and temper of the best of hypocrites. Oh! but a sincere Nathanael labours in all places, and in all cases and services, to approve himself to God; he labours as much to approve himself to God in a wood, where no eye sees him, as he doth when the eyes of thousands are fixed upon him.[3] The sun would shine bright though all men were asleep at high noon, and no eyes open to see the glory of his beams: so a sincere heart will shine, he will labour to do good; though all the world should shut their eyes, yet he will eye his work, and eye his God. He knows that God is *totus oculus*, all eye, and therefore he cares not though others have never an eye to observe

[1] חקרני, to make a strict search and inquisition.

[2] Mat. vi. and xxiii. Also it is Chrysostom's observation, that she that paints tears and blubberings, is worse than a wanton woman that paints to seem fair. Hom. vi. *in Mat.*

[3] *Noli peccare; Deus videt, angeli astant*, take heed what thou doest, God beholds thee, angels observe thee, saith one.

him, to applaud him. Let God but secretly whisper him in the ear, and say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant!' and it is enough to his soul, enough to satisfy him, enough to cheer him, and enough to encourage him in the ways and the work of his God.

[2.] *The second distinction.* He *labours to get up to the very top of holiness; he labours to live up to his own principles.* He cannot be satisfied with so much grace as will bring him to glory, but he labours to be high in grace, that he may be high in glory: Philip. iii. 11, 'I desire if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead, that is, to that perfection that the dead shall attain to in the morning of the resurrection.[1] Verily, that man is ripe for heaven who counts it his greatest happiness to be high in holiness; that man shall never be low in heaven, a door-keeper in heaven, that cannot be satisfied till he be got up to the very top of Jacob's ladder, till he hath attained to the highest perfection in grace and holiness. Ps. xlv. 13, 'The king's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold.' Her inward principles are all glorious, and her outward practice echoes to her inward principles: 'her clothing is of wrought gold.'

It was the honour and glory of Joshua and Caleb, that they followed the Lord fully, Num. xiv. 24, that is, they lived up to their own principles. So those virgins in Rev. xiv. 4, 5, that were without spot before the throne of God, they followed the Lamb wheresoever he went, that is, they lived up to their profession; there was a sweet harmony betwixt their principles and practices. And thus the apostles lived: 2 Cor. i. 12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards.' 1 Thes. ii. 10, 'Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe.' Thus we see these worthies living up to their own principles.[2] Blessed Bradford and Bucer lived so up to their principles, that their friends could not sufficiently praise them, nor their foes find anything justly to fasten on them.

Believers know,

(1.) That their living up to their own principles, doth best evidence Christ living in them, and their union with him, Gal. ii. 20.

(2.) They know that it is not their profession, but living up to their principles, that will effectually stop the mouths, and convince the consciences of vain men: 1 Peter ii. 15, 'For so is the will of God, that by well-doing,' that is, by living up to your own principles, 'you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.' There is no such way in the world to still and silence wicked men, to make them dumb and speechless, to muzzle and tie up their mouths, as the Greek word notes, φιμοῦν, as by living up to your own principles. The lives of men convince more strongly than their words; the tongue persuades, but the life commands.

(3.) They know by living up to their principles, they cast a general

[1] He cannot be satisfied with so much grace as will keep him from dropping into hell; but he must have so much grace as will make him shine gloriously in heaven.

[2] *Vivimus præceptis, non factis*, we live by precepts, not by deeds; *legibus Dei, non exemplis hominum*, by the laws of God, not by the examples of men.

glory upon Christ and his ways. This makes Christ and his ways to be well thought on and well spoke on, Mat. v. 16; 1 Peter ii. 11, 12; 2 Peter i. 5–13.

(4.) They know that the ready way, the only way to get and keep assurance, joy, peace, &c., is to live up to their principles.

(5.) They know that by living below their own principles, or contrary to their own principles, they do but gratify Satan, and provoke wicked men to blaspheme that worthy name by which they are called, they know that by their not living up to their own principles they do but multiply their own fears and doubts, and put a sword into the hand of conscience, and make sad work for future repentance.

Now these and such like considerations do exceedingly stir and provoke believers to labour with all their might to live up to their own principles, to get to the very top of holiness, to be more and more a-pressing towards the mark, and to think that nothing is done till they have attained the highest perfections that are attainable in this life. It is true, many hypocrites may go up some rounds of Jacob's ladder, such as make for their profit, pleasure, applause, and yet tumble down at last to the bottom of hell, as Judas and others have done. Hypocrites do not look, nor like, nor love to come up to the top of Jacob's ladder, Gen. xxviii. 12, to the top of holiness, as you may see in the Scribes and Pharisees, and all other hypocrites that the Scripture speaks of.[1]

[3.] *The third distinction. It is their greatest desire and endeavour that sin may be cured, rather than covered.* Sin most afflicts a gracious soul. David cries out, not *Perii*, but *Peccavi*, not I am undone, but I have done foolishly, Ps. li. 3. Daniel complains not, we are reproached and oppressed, but we have rebelled, Dan. ix. 5. Paul cries not out of his persecutors, but of the law in his members rebelling against the law of his mind, Rom. vii. 23. A gracious soul grieves more that God by his sin is grieved and dishonoured, than that for it he is afflicted and chastened.

The hart feeling within her the operation of the serpent's poison, runs from the thorns and thickets, and runs over the green and pleasant pastures, that she may drink of the fountain and be cured.[2] So gracious souls, being sensible of the poison and venom of sin, runs from the creatures, that are but as thorns and thickets, and runs over their own duties and righteousness, which are but as pleasant pastures, to come to Christ the fountain of life, that they may drink of those waters of consolation, of those wells of salvation that be in him, and cast up and cast out their spiritual poison, and be cured for ever. Believers know that their sins do most pierce and grieve the Lord, they lie hardest and heaviest upon his heart, and are most obvious to his eye, Amos ii. 13. The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond, Jer. xvii. 1; their sins are against beams of strongest light,

[1] James ii. 7. The very heathen, as Salvian observes, did thus reproach Christians that walked contrary to their principles. Where is that good law which they do believe? They read and hear the holy Scriptures, and yet are drunk and unclean; they follow Christ, and yet disobey Christ; they profess a holy law, and yet do lead impure lives.

[2] If a snake should sting thy dearly beloved spouse to death, wouldst thou preserve it alive, warm it at the fire, hug it in thy bosom, and not rather stab it with a thousand wounds? You are wise, and know how to apply it.

they are against the bowels of tenderest mercy, they are against the manifestations of greatest love, they are against the nearest and dearest relations, they are against the choicest and highest expectations; and this makes believing souls cry out, Oh, a cure, Lord! a cure, Lord! Oh give me purging grace, give me purging grace; though I should never taste of pardoning mercy, yet give me purging grace.[1]

It was a notable speech of Cosmus, duke of Florence, 'I have read,' saith he, 'that I must forgive my enemies, but never that I must forgive my friends.' The sins of God's friends, of God's people, provoke him most, and sad him most, and this makes them sigh and groan it out, 'Who shall deliver us from this body of death?' Rom. vii. 24. Oh! but now wicked men labour, not that sin may be cured, but only that sin might be covered, Hosea vii. 10–16; and that the consequents of sin, viz., affliction and the stinging of conscience, may be removed, as you may see in Cain, Saul, Judas, and divers others:' Hosea v. 14, 15, 'In their affliction they will seek me early,' saith God; they will then seek to be rid of their affliction, but not to be rid of their sins that hath brought down the affliction upon them. Like the patient that would fain be rid of his pain and torment, under which he groans, but cares not to be rid of those evil habits that have brought the pain and torment upon him. Ps. lxxviii. 34–37, 'When he slew them, then they sought him; and they returned and inquired early after God: and they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not upright with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.'[2] In these words you see plainly, that these people are very early and earnest in seeking God, to take off his hand, to remove the judgments that were upon them, but not that God would cure them of those sins that provoked him to draw his sword, and to make it drunk with their blood; for, notwithstanding the sad slaughters that divine justice had made among them, they did but flatter and lie, and play the hypocrites with God; they would fain be rid of their sufferings, but did not care to be rid of their sins. Ah! but a gracious soul cries out, Lord, do but take away my sins, and it will satisfy me and cheer me, though thou shouldst never take off thy heavy hand. A true Nathanael sighs it out under his greatest affliction, as that good man did, *A me, me salva domine*, deliver me, O Lord, from that evil man myself.[3] No burden to the burden of sin. Lord! says the believing soul; deliver me from my inward burden, and lay upon me what outward burden thou pleasest.

(4.) *The fourth distinction. Are not your souls taken with Christ as chief? is he not in your eye the chiefest of ten thousand? is he not altogether lovely?* Cant. v. 10, 16. Yes, have you any in heaven but he, and is there any on earth that you desire in comparison of him? Prov.

[1] When Brutus went to stab Julius Cæsar, he cried out, What, thou my son Brutus, &c. [The memorable *Et tu quoque*, &c.—G.] So may God well cry out, What, thou my son! What, wilt thou stab me with thy sins? is it not enough that others stab my honour? but wilt thou, my son?

[2] Sin doth ill in the eye, worse in the tongue, worser in the heart, but worst of all in the life. Ah, England, England, as face answers face, so doth thy carriage towards God answer the carriage of these people, whose baseness and falseness God hath put upon record to this very day, &c.

[3] Augustine, Confessions.—G.

iii. 15; Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26; Philip. iii. 7, 8. No. Do not you lift up Jesus Christ as high as God the Father lifts him? God the Father lifts up Christ above all principalities and powers, Eph. i. 21, Philip. ii. 9; he lifts up Christ above all your duties, above all your privileges, above all your mercies, above all your graces, above all your contentments, above all your enjoyments; do not you thus lift up Jesus Christ? Yes.[1] As he is the Father's chiefest jewel, so he is your choicest jewel, is he not? Yes. Verily none can lift up Christ as chief, unless Christ have their hearts, and they dearly love him, and believe in him, for Christ is only precious to them that believe, 1 Peter ii. 7. Luther had rather be in hell with Christ, than in heaven without him; is not that the frame of thy heart? Yes. Why then dost thou say thou hast no grace, thou hast no Christ. Surely none but those that have union with Christ, and that shall eternally reign with Christ, can set such a high price upon the person of Christ. The true believer, *amat Christum propter Christum*, loves Christ for Christ; he loves Christ for his personal excellencies, Cant. v. 10–16.[2]

What Alexander said of his two friends, is applicable to many in our day; says he, 'Hæphestion loves me as I am Alexander, but Craterus loves me as I am King Alexander.'[3] One loved him for his person, the other for the benefits he received by him. So some Nathanaels there be that love Christ for his person, for his personal excellency, for his personal beauty, for his personal glory; they see those perfections of grace and holiness in Christ, that would render him very lovely and desirable in their eyes, though they should never get a kingdom, a crown by it.[4] But most of those that bear any love and good-will to Christ, do it only in respect of the benefits they receive by him.

It was Augustine's complaint of old, *vix deligitur Jesus propter Jesum*, that scarce any love Christ but for his rewards. Few follow him for love, but for loaves, John vi. 26; few follow him for his inward excellencies, many follow him for their outward advantages; few follow him that they may be made good by him, but many follow him that they may be great by him. Certainly, you are the bosom friends of Christ, you are in the very heart of Christ, who prize Christ above all, who lift up Jesus Christ as high as God the Father lifts him, and that because of his rich anointings, and because all his garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, Ps. xlv. 6–8. This is a work too high and too hard, too great and too noble, for all that are not new-born, that are not twice born, that are not of the blood-royal, that are not partakers of the divine nature.

[5.] *The fifth distinction. Are not your greatest and your hottest conflicts against inward pollutions, against those secret sins that are only obvious to the eye of God and your own souls?*[5] The light of nature's education, and some common convictions of the Spirit, may put

[1] 'None but Christ, none but Christ!' cries the martyr. [Sanders?—G.]

[2] *Amat Deus, non aliunde hoc habet, sed ipse est unde amat.*—Augustine.

[3] See Index under Hæphestion.—G.

[4] When one asked Cato's daughter why she would not marry again, she being young when her husband died, answered, Because she could not find a man that loved her more than her goods. Few there are that love Christ more than his goods, &c.

[5] It was a good prayer of him that said, Lord, *Libera me a malo homine, a meipso.* [Augustine, as before.—G.]

men upon combating with those sins that are obvious to every eye, but it must be a supernatural power and principle that puts men upon conflicting with the inward motions and secret operations of sin, Rom. vii. 23. The apostle complains of a law in his members warring against the law of his mind. The war was within doors, the fight was inward. The apostle was deeply engaged against a law within him, which made him sigh it out, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?' So David cries out, 'Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults,' Ps. xix. 12. So Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, or for the lifting up of his heart, as the Hebrew hath it, 2 Chron. xxxii. 26 [בגבה לבו הוא]. His recovery from sickness, his victories over his enemies, and his rich treasures, lifted up his heart. Oh! but for those outward risings and vauntings of heart Hezekiah humbles himself, he abases and lays himself low before the Lord. A sincere heart weeps and laments bitterly over those secret and inward corruptions that others will scarce acknowledge to be sins. Many a man there is that bleeds inwardly, and dies for ever; many a soul is eternally slain by the inward workings of sin, and he sees it not, he knows it not, till it be too late.[1]

Oh! but a true Nathanael mourns over the inward motions and first risings of sin in his soul, and so prevents an eternal danger. Upon every stirring of sin in the soul the believer cries out, O Lord, help; O Lord, undertake for me; oh dash these brats of Babylon in pieces; oh stifle the first motions of sin, that they may never conceive and bring forth, to the wounding of two at once, thy honour and my own conscience!

[6.] *The sixth distinction. Are you not subject to Christ as a head?* Yes; devils and wicked men are subject to Christ as a Lord, but those that are by faith united to him, and that have a spiritual interest in him, are subject to him as a head.

I shall open this particular thus unto you.

First, The members are willingly and sweetly subject to the head; their subjection is voluntary, not compulsory.[2] It is so with a believing soul: Ps. xxvii. 8, 'When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' So Ps. cx. 3, 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness.' So Paul cries out, 'What wilt thou have me to do?' Acts ix. 6, and professes that he is willing not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of Christ, Acts xxi. 13. A gracious soul is in some measure naturalised to the work of Christ, and Christ's work is in some measure naturalised to the soul.

Secondly, The members are subject to the head universally, they do all the head enjoineth;[3] so the real members of Christ do in sincerity endeavour universally to subject to all that Christ their head requires, without any exception or reservation: Luke i. 5, 6, 'Zacharias and Elizabeth walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord

[1] The Persian kings reign powerfully, and yet are seldom seen in public. Secret sins reign in many men's souls powerfully and dangerously, when least apparently.

[2] Every true Nathanael's motto is, *Omnia ex voluntate Dei*, all must be as God will have it.

[3] Their obedience is universal, (1.) in respect of the act of eschewing all evil, doing all good; (2.) in respect of the rule, the whole word of God; (3.) in respect of their general and particular calling.

blameless.' They walked without halting or halving of it with God; they fell in with every part and point of God's revealed will, without prejudice or partiality, without tilting the balance on one side or another: Acts xiii. 22, 'I have found David the son of Jesse a man after my own heart, which shall fulfil all my will,' or rather 'all my wills,' as the Greek hath it [θελήματα], to note the universality and sincerity of his obedience.

Thirdly, The members are subject to the head constantly, unwearyedly. The members are never weary of obeying the head; they obey in all places, cases, and times; so are the real members of Christ: Acts xxiv. 16, 'And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.'[1] I use all diligence, skill, cunning, and conscience, to be sincere and inoffensive in all my motions and actions towards God and towards men. So David, Ps. cxix. 112, 'I have inclined my heart' (or rather, as the Hebrew word signifies, 'I have stretched out my heart,' as a man would do a piece of parchment) 'to do thy statutes' (the Hebrew word signifies to do accurately, exactly, perfectly) 'alway, even unto the end.'[2] A gracious soul is not like a deceitful bow, nor like the morning dew, but he is like the sun, that rejoiceth to run his race; he is like the stone in Thracia, that neither burneth in the fire nor sinketh in the water.[3] Now tell me, pray tell me, O you doubting souls, whether you do not,

(1.) Labour in all duties and services to approve your hearts to God?

(2.) Whether you do not endeavour to get up to the very top of holiness, and to live up to your own principles?

(3.) Whether it be not your greatest desire and endeavour that sin may be cured rather than covered?

(4.) Whether you are not taken with Christ as chief? whether you do not, in your judgments and affections, lift up Christ above all, as God the Father doth?

(5.) Whether your greatest and hottest conflicts and combats be not against inward pollutions, against those secret stirrings and operations of sin, which are only obvious to the eye of God and your own souls?

(6.) Whether you do not, in respect of the general bent and frame of your hearts, subject to Christ as your head?

[1.] Freely and sweetly.

[2.] Universally, in one thing as well as another, without any exception or reservation.

[3.] Constantly and unwearily. Yes; we do these things; we should belie the grace of God if we should say otherwise. These things the Lord hath wrought in us and for us, Isa. xxvi. 12. Well, then, know,

First, That your estate is good; you have certainly a blessed interest in the Lord Jesus. None can do these things but souls that have union with Christ, that are interested in Christ, that are acted by the peculiar and special influences of Christ, and that are highly beloved of Christ. Verily, these are such flowers of paradise that cannot be gathered in nature's garden; they are pearls of that price that God

[1] διαπαντός, always, or throughout in all cases, or at all times.

[2] נטיתי לבי לעשות, from עשה.

[3] Asbestos.—G.

bestows upon none but those that are the price of Christ's blood. All the men in the world cannot prove by the Scripture that these jewels can be found in any men's breasts but in theirs that have union and communion with Christ, and that shall reign for ever with Christ.[1]

Secondly, Know that it is no iniquity, but rather your duty, for you to suck sweetness out of these honeycombs, and to look upon these things as infallible pledges and evidences of divine favour, and of your everlasting happiness and blessedness. Some there be that make the witness of the Spirit, of which I shall, towards the close of this discourse, speak at large, the only evidence of our interest in Christ, and deny all other evidences from the fruit of the Spirit;[2] but this is to deny the fruit, growing upon the tree, to be an evidence that the tree is alive, whereas all know, that the fruit growing upon the tree is an infallible and undeniable evidence that there is life in the tree. Certainly it is one thing to judge by our graces, and another thing to rest upon our graces, or to put trust in our graces. When one argues from the beams of the sun, that there is a sun, one would think that the most cavilling spirit in the world should lie quiet and still.

(7.) *The seventh means* to get a well-grounded assurance of your everlasting happiness and blessedness is, *to grow and increase more and more in grace.* 2 Pet. i. 5–11, 'Add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge, &c. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' By entrance into the everlasting kingdom of Christ, is not meant a local entrance into heaven; for heaven is nowhere called the kingdom of Christ, but the Father's kingdom. The opposition, ver. 9, sheweth clearly that it is meant of assurance. Now, the way to full assurance is by adding grace to grace. The Greek word that is here rendered '*add,*' hath a greater emphasis; it signifies to link our graces together, as virgins in a dance do link their hands together.[3] Oh! we must be still a-joining grace to grace, we must still be adding one grace to another, we must still be a-leading up the dance of graces. Great measures of grace carry with them great evidence of truth, little measures carry with them but little evidence; great measures of grace carry with them the greatest evidence of the soul's union and communion with Christ; and the more evident your union and communion with Christ is, the more clear and full will your assurance be.[4]

Great measures of grace carry with them the greatest and clearest evidences of the glorious indwellings of the Spirit in you, and the more you are persuaded of the real indwellings of the Spirit in you, the

[1] If these things could be found in the most shining hypocrites, or any others but real saints, they could not possibly be either a first or second evidence. Though a man could see them in the light of the Spirit, this is carefully to be observed against those that hold these good second evidences, &c.

[2] We have cause enough to keep off doubtings and distress of spirit upon the bare sight of our evidences. This, complaining, cavilling souls will not understand.

[3] Though our graces be our best jewels, yet they are imperfect, and do not give out their full lustre; they are like the moon, which, when it shineth brightest, hath a dark spot. Therefore, we should add still grace to grace, ἐπιχορηγήσατε.

[4] If moral virtue, saith Plato, could be seen with mortal eyes, it would soon draw all hearts to itself. Oh how much the more should our hearts be drawn out after the highest measures of grace! the least dram of grace being more worth than all moral virtue.

higher will your assurance rise. Great measures of grace will be a fire that will consume and burn up the dross, the stubble, the fears and doubts that perplex the soul, and that cause darkness to surround the soul. Now, the more you are rid of your fears, doubts, and darkness, the more easily, and the more effectually will your hearts be persuaded that the thoughts of God towards you are thoughts of love; that you are precious in his eyes, and that he will rejoice over you, to do you good for ever, Jer. xxxii. 41, &c.

(8.) *The eighth means* to gain a well-grounded assurance of your everlasting happiness and blessedness is, *to take your hearts when they are in the best and most spiritual frame and temper God-wards, heaven-wards, and holiness-wards.* Times of temptation and desertion, &c., are praying times, hearing times, mourning times, and believing times; but they are not trying times, they are not seasonable times for doubting souls to set themselves about so great and so solemn a work as that is, of searching and examining how things stand, and are like to stand, between God and them for ever, 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

Be diligent and constant, be studious and conscientious in observing the frame and temper of your own hearts, and when you find them most plain, most melting, most yielding, most tender and humble, most sweetly raised, and most divinely composed, then, oh then, is the time to single out the most convenient place where thou mayest with greatest freedom open thy bosom to God, and plead with him as for thy life, that he would shew thee how things stand between him and thee, and how it must fare with thy soul for ever.[1] And when thou hast thus set thyself before God, and opened thy bosom to God, then wisely observe what report God and thy own renewed conscience do make concerning thy eternal condition: 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak,' saith David; 'for he will speak peace unto his people, and they shall not return to folly,' so the Hebrew may be read.[2] Oh! so must thou stand still, when thou hast sincerely unbowelled thyself before the Lord, and listen and hearken what God will say unto thee. Surely he will speak peace unto thee, he will say, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee,' thy heart is upright with me; my soul is set upon thee; I have already blessed thee, and I will hereafter glorify thee.

I have read of one who was kept from destroying of himself,—being much tempted by Satan thereunto,—by remembering that there was a time when he solemnly set himself in prayer and self-examination before the Lord, and made a diligent inquiry into his spiritual condition; and in the close of that work, it was evidenced to him that his heart was upright with God, and this kept him from laying of violent hands upon himself.[3] Oh! a wise and serious observing what that testimony is that God, conscience, and the word gives in upon solemn prayer and self-examination may beget strong consolation, and support the soul under the greatest affliction, and strengthen the soul against

[1] Our hearts are ponderous, *Multum trahit de terra, de carne multum*, therefore we had need take them when in the best temper, &c.

[2] Ps. lxxxv. 8, 9, ואל ישובו לכסלה.

[3] A good conscience is *mille testes*, a thousand witnesses; therefore make much of its testimony.

the most violent temptations, and make the soul look and long for the day of dissolution, as princes do for their day of coronation.

(9.) *The ninth means* to gain a well-grounded assurance is, *to make a diligent inquiry whether thou hast those things that do accompany eternal salvation:* Heb. vi. 9, 'But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation;' or as it is in the Greek, ἐχόμενα, 'that have salvation,' as it were in the very bowels of them, that comprehend salvation and that touch upon salvation.

Oh! beloved, if you have those choice things that accompany salvation, that comprehend salvation, you may be abundantly assured of your salvation.

But you may say to me,

What are those things that accompany salvation?

To this question I shall give this answer, viz., that there are seven special things that accompany salvation, and they are these:

1, *Knowledge;* 2, *Faith;* 3, *Repentance;* 4, *Obedience;* 5, *Love;* 6, *Prayer;* 7, *Perseverance.*

(1.) *Knowledge* is one of those special things that accompanies salvation: John xvii. 3, 'And this is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.'[1] Divine knowledge is the beginning of eternal life; it is a spark of glory, it works life in the soul, it is a taste and pledge of eternal life: 1 John v. 20, 'And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ; this is the true God, and eternal life.' 2 Peter i. 3, 'According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.'[2] What this knowledge is that accompanies salvation, I shall shew you anon.

(2.) Secondly, *Faith* is another of those special things that accompanies salvation: 2 Thes. ii. 13, 'But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.'[3] 1 Peter i. 5, 'You who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.' Heb. x. 39, 'But we are not of them who draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.' John iii. 14–16, 'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Ver. 36, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.' Chap. v. 24, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.' Chap. vi. 40, 'And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I

[1] *Vide* [John] Piscator on the words. [Com. on Bib. 4 vols. folio, 1643.—G.]

[2] It is called eternal life, *Quia radix et origo vitæ; in legendis libris non quæramus scientiam, sed saporem.*—Bernard. In reading books, let us not look so much for science as a savouriness of the truth upon our own hearts.

[3] *Vide* Pareus, Estius, and Gerhard on the text.

will raise him up at the last day.' Ver. 47, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.'[1]

(3.) Thirdly, *Repentance* is another of those choice things that accompanies salvation: 2 Cor. vii. 10, 'For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death.' Jer. iv. 14, 'O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved.' Acts xi. 18, 'When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.' Mat. xviii. 3, 'And Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Acts iii. 19, 'Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the time of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.'[2]

(4.) Fourthly, *Obedience* is another of those precious things that accompanies salvation. Heb. v. 9, 'And being made perfect,' speaking of Christ, 'he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.' Ps. l. 23, 'Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I declare the salvation of God.'

(5.) Fifthly, *Love* is another of those singular things that accompanies salvation. 2 Tim. iv. 8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto them also that love his appearing.'[3] James ii. 5, 'Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him?' 1 Cor. ii. 9, 'It is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' James i. 12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.' Mat. xix. 28, 'And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.' The whole is as if Christ had said, Whosoever shall shew love to me, this way or that, in one thing or another, out of respect to my name, to my honour, mercy shall be his portion here, and glory shall be his portion hereafter.[4]

[1] Mark xvi. 16; Acts xvi. 31; Rom. x. 9; Isa. xlv. 22; Philip. ii. 8; John xi. 25, 26; 1 John v. 10. All these and many more scriptures speak out the same truth. This double asseveration or protestation is used only in matters of weight; and unhappy are we that we cannot believe without them.

[2] The very word *repent* was very displeasing to Luther till his conversion, but afterward he took delight in the work, *Pœnitens de peccato dolet et de dolore gaudet*, to sorrow for his sin, and then rejoice in his sorrow. *Vide* B. Down. of Justification, lib. vii. cap. 7. [That is, George Downaine, Bishop of Derry: Treatise of Justification, 1623.—G.]

[3] *Deus nihil coronat nisi dona sua.*—Augustine. When God crowneth us, he doth but crown his own gifts in us.

[4] The word *crown* notes to us, (1.) the perpetuity of that life the apostle speaks of, for a crown hath neither beginning nor ending; (2.) it notes plenty; the crown fetches a compass on every side; (3.) it notes dignity; (4.) it notes majesty. Eternal life is a

(6.) Sixthly, *Prayer* is another of those sweet things that accompanies salvation. Rom. x. 10, 13, 'For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' Acts ii. 21, 'And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' That is, saith one, he shall be certainly sealed up to salvation. Or as another saith, He that hath this grace of prayer, it is an evident sign and assurance to him, that he shall be saved. Therefore to have grace to pray, is a better and a greater mercy than to have gifts to prophesy, Mat. vii. 22. Praying souls shall find the gates of heaven open to them, when prophesying souls shall find them shut against them.

(7.) Seventhly and lastly, *perseverance* is another of those prime things that accompanies salvation. Mat. x. 22, 'And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake, but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.'[1] Chap. xxiv. 12, 13, 'And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold; but he that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved.' Rev. ii. 10, 'Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' Chap. iii. 5, 'He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.'[2]

Thus you see these seven choice things that accompany salvation. But for your further and fuller edification, satisfaction, confirmation, and consolation, it will be very necessary that I shew you,

(1.) What knowledge that is that accompanies salvation, that borders, that touches upon salvation.

(2.) What faith that is that accompanies salvation.

(3.) What repentance that is that accompanies salvation.

(4.) What obedience that is that accompanies salvation.

(5.) What love that is that accompanies salvation.

(6.) What prayer that is that accompanies salvation.

(7.) What perseverance that is that accompanies salvation.

I hope when I have fully opened these precious things to you, that you will be able to sit down much satisfied and cheered in a holy confidence and blessed assurance of your everlasting well-being.

I shall begin with the first, and shew you what that knowledge is that accompanies salvation, that comprehends salvation, that touches upon salvation; and that I shall open in these following particulars:

(1.) *The first property.* That knowledge that accompanies salvation is *a working knowledge, an operative knowledge:* 2 Cor. iv. 6, 'God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our

coronation day; it notes all joys, all delights; in a word, it notes all good, it notes all glory.

[1] The same words you have in Mark xiii. 13.

[2] A crown without cares, fears, co-rivals, envy, end. God turns the crown of thorns into a crown of glory: *Pericula non respicit martyr, coronas respicit.*—Basil.

hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' Divine light reaches the heart as well as the head.[1] The beams of divine light shining in upon the soul through the glorious face of Christ are very working; they warm the heart, they affect the heart, they new-mould the heart. Divine knowledge masters the heart, it guides the heart, it governs the heart, it sustains the heart, it relieves the heart: Rom. vi. 6, 'We know that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.'[2] Divine knowledge puts a man upon crucifying of sin; it keeps a man from being a servant, a slave to sin, which no other knowledge can do. Under all other knowledge, men remain servants to their lusts, and are taken prisoners by Satan at his will. No knowledge lifts a man up above his lusts but that which accompanies salvation. The wisest philosophers and the greatest doctors, as Socrates and others, under all their sublime notions and rare speculations, have been kept in bondage by their lusts. That knowledge that accompanies salvation is operative knowledge: 1 John ii. 3, 4, 'And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.'[3] By keeping his commandments they did know that they did know him; that is, they were assured that they did know him. To know that we know, is to be assured that we know: So James iii. 17, 'But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.' Ver. 13, 'Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge amongst you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works, with meekness of wisdom.' Divine knowledge fills a man full of spiritual activity; it will make a man work as if he would be saved by his works, and yet it will make a man believe that he is saved only upon the account of free grace, Eph. ii. 8. That knowledge that is not operative and working, will only serve to light souls to hell, and to double damn all that have it, Mat. xxiii. 14.

(2.) *The second property.* That knowledge that accompanies salvation is *transforming knowledge, it is metamorphosing knowledge.* It is knowledge that transforms, that metamorphoses the soul: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'But we with open face, beholding the glory of the Lord as in a glass, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.' Divine light beating on the heart, warms it, and betters it; it transforms and changes it, it moulds and fashions it into the very likeness of Christ, *μεταμορφούμεθα.*

The naturalists observe,[4] that the pearl, by the often beating of the sunbeams upon it, becomes radiant; so the often beating and shining of the Sun of righteousness, with his divine beams, upon the saints, causes them to glister and shine in holiness, righteousness, heavenly-

[1] Knowledge that swims in the head only, and sinks not down into the heart, doth no more good than rain in the middle region, or than the unicorn's horn in the unicorn's head.

[2] 1 John iii. 6. Whosoever sinneth (viz. customarily, habitually, delightfully, hath not seen him, neither known him.

[3] He is a liar in a double respect: (1.) in that he saith he hath that knowledge which he hath not; (2.) in that he denies that in his works which he affirms in his words.

[4] Cf. Pliny, Nat. Hist., lib. ix. cap. 54–56; Ælian Hist. Anim., ii.—G.

mindedness, humbleness, &c. Divine light casts a general beauty and glory upon the soul; it transforms a man more and more into the glorious image of Christ. Look, as the child receiveth from his parents member for member, limb for limb, or as the paper from the press receiveth letter for letter, the wax from the seal print for print, or as the face in the glass answers to the face of the man, or as indenture answers to indenture, so the beams of divine light and knowledge shining into the soul, stamp the lively image of Christ upon the soul, and make it put on the Lord Jesus, and resemble him to the life.[1] Notional knowledge may make a man excellent at praising the glorious and worthy acts and virtues of Christ; but that transforming knowledge that accompanies salvation, will work a man divinely to imitate the glorious acts and virtues of Christ: 1 Peter ii. 9, 'But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him' (τὰς ἀρετὰς, the virtues of him) 'who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.' When God causes his divine light, his marvellous light, to shine in upon the soul, then a Christian will (ἐξαγγείλητε) preach forth the virtues of Christ in an imitable practice, and till then a man, under all other knowledge, will remain an incarnate devil. When a beam of divine light shined from heaven upon Paul, ah, how did it change and metamorphose him! How did it alter and transform him! It made his rebellious soul obedient: Acts ix. 6, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?'[2] God bids him arise and go into the city, and it should be told him what he should do; and he obeys the heavenly vision, chap. xxvi. 19. Divine light makes this lion a lamb, this persecutor a preacher, this destroyer of the saints a builder up of the saints, this tormenter a comforter, this monster an angel, this notorious blasphemer a very great admirer of God, and the actings of his free grace, as you may see by comparing Acts ix. and xxvi. together.

So when a spark of this heavenly fire fell upon the heart of Mary Magdalene, Luke vii. 36, 37, oh what a change, what a turn doth it make in her! Now she loves much, and believes much, and repents much, and weeps much. Oh what a change did divine light make in Zaccheus, and in the jailor! Verily, if thy light, thy knowledge doth not better thee, if it doth not change and transform thee, if, under all thy light and knowledge thou remainest as vile and base as ever, thy light, thy knowledge, thy notions, thy speculations, will be like to fire, not on the hearth, but in the room, that will burn the house and the inhabitant too; it will be like mettle in a blind horse, that serves for nothing but to break the neck of the rider. That knowledge that is not a transforming knowledge, will torment a man at last more than all the devils in hell; it will be a sword to cut him, a rod to lash him, a serpent to bite him, a scorpion to sting him, and a vulture, a worm eternally gnawing him.

When Tamberlain was in his wars, one having found and digged

[1] A father stands obliged, not only in point of honour, but also by the law of nature, to receive his child that bears his image; so doth Christ to receive those that by divine light have his image stamped upon them.

[2] Acts ix. 3, &c. Divine light lays upon a man *felix necessitas*, a happy necessity of obeying God, &c.

up a great pot of gold, brought it to him, Tamberlain asked whether it had his father's stamp upon it; but when he saw it had the Roman stamp, and not his father's, he would not own it. So God at last will own no knowledge, but that which leaves the stamp of Christ, the print of Christ, the image of Christ upon the heart, but that which changes and transforms the soul, that makes a man a new man, another man than what he was before divine light shined upon him.

(3.) *The third property.* That knowledge that accompanies salvation is *experimental knowledge.* It is knowledge that springs from a spiritual sense and taste of holy and heavenly things. Cant. i. 2, 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine.'[1] The spouse had experienced the sweetness of Christ's love; 'his loves,' says she, 'is better than wine,' though wine is an excellent creature, a useful creature, a comfortable and delightful creature, a reviving and restorative creature. And this draws out her heart, and makes her insatiable in longing, and very earnest in coveting, not a kiss, but kisses, not a little, but much of Christ. Her knowledge being experimental, she is impatient and restless, till she was drawn into the nearest and highest communion and fellowship with Christ. So in ver. 13, 'A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.' Myrrh is marvellous sweet and savoury, 'so is my well-beloved unto me, says the spouse;' I have found Jesus Christ to be marvellous sweet and savoury to my soul. Myrrh is bitter to the taste, though it be sweet to the smell; so is my well-beloved unto me, says the spouse.[2] I have found him to be bitter and bloody to the old man, to the ignoble and worser part of man; and I have found him to be sweet and lovely to the new man, to the regenerate man, to the noble part of man. I have found him to be a bitter and a bloody enemy to my sins, and at the same time to be a sweet and precious friend unto my soul.[3] Myrrh is of a preserving nature, it is hot and dry in the second degree, as the naturalists observe; so is my well-beloved unto me, says the spouse. Oh! I have found the Lord Jesus preserving my soul from closing with such and such temptations, and from falling under the power of such and such corruptions, and from fainting under such and such afflictions, &c.[4] Considerable to the same purpose is that of Philip. i. 9, 'And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment.' The Greek word that is here rendered '*judgment,*' properly signifies sense,[5] not a corporal, but a spiritual sense and taste, an inward experimental knowledge of holy and heavenly things. The apostle well knew that all notional and speculative knowledge would leave men on this side heaven, and therefore he earnestly prays that their knowledge might be experimental, that being the knowledge that accompanies salvation, that will give a man at last a possession of salvation. Verily, that knowledge that is only notional, speculative, and general, that is

[1] דדיך. By loves, his (plural) loves, she means all the fruits of his love, viz. righteousness, holiness, joy, peace, assurance, &c.

[2] Ps. xlv. 8; Prov. vii. 17. So Pliny, lib. xii. c. 15, 16, &c. [Rather c. 33–35.—G.]

[3] Every good man hath in him two men, Rom. vii. 15–25; Gal. v. 17.

[4] Austin thanks God that his heart and the temptation did not meet together.

[5] αἰσθήσει, sense. The soul hath her senses as well as the body, and they must be exercised, Heb. v. 14.

gathered out of books, discourses, and other outward advantages, is such a knowledge that will make men sit down on this side salvation, as it did Judas, Demas, the scribes and pharisees, &c.[1] Christ will at last shut the door of hope, of help, of consolation and salvation, upon all those that know much of him notionally, but nothing feelingly, as you may see in his shutting the door of happiness against the foolish virgins, Mat. xxv. 11, 12, and against those forward professors, preachers, and workers of miracles, Mat. vii. 22, who had much speculative knowledge, but no experimental knowledge; who had much outward general knowledge of Christ, but no spiritual inward acquaintance with Christ.[2]

A man that hath that experimental knowledge that accompanies salvation, will from his experience tell you, that sin is the greatest evil in the world, for he hath found it so, Rom. vii.; that Christ is the one thing necessary, for he hath found him so, Ps. xxvii. 4; that the favour of God is better than life, for he hath found it so, Ps. lxiii. 3; that pardoning mercy only makes a man happy, for he hath found it so, Ps. xxxii. 1, 2; that a wounded spirit is such a burden that none can bear, for he hath found it so, Prov. xviii. 14; that an humble and a broken heart is an acceptable sacrifice to God, for he hath found it so, Ps. li. 17; that the promises are precious pearls, for he hath found them so, 2 Peter i. 4; that the smiles of God will make up the want of any outward mercy, for he hath found it so, Ps. iv. 6, 7; that communion with God can only make a heaven in a believer's heart, for he hath found it so, Ps. xlviii. 10; that if the Spirit be pleased and obeyed, he will be a comforter to the soul, for he hath found it so, John xvi. 7; but if his motions and laws be slighted and neglected, he will stand far off from the soul, he will vex and gall the soul, Lam. i. 16, Isa. lxiii. 10, 11. Well! souls, remember this, that knowledge that is not experimental will never turn to your account, it will only increase your guilt and torment, as it did the Scribes' and Pharisees'. What advantage had the men of the old world, by their knowing that there was an ark, or by their clambering about the ark, when they were shut out and drowned in the flood! What doth it profit a man to see heaps of jewels and pearls, and mountains of gold and silver, when he is moneyless and penniless? It is rather a torment than a comfort to know that there is a pardon for other malefactors, but none for me; that there is bread for such and such hungry souls, but none for me; that there is water and wine to cheer, comfort, and refresh such and such, but not a sip, a drop, for me; my bottle is empty, and I may die for thirst, whilst others are drinking at the fountain-head; that there is houses and clothes to shelter such and such from colds, storms, and tempests, whilst I lie naked with Lazarus at Dives's door, exposed to the misery of all weathers. This kind of knowledge doth rather torment men than comfort them, it does but add fuel to the fire, and make their hell the hotter. The knowledge that devils and apostates have of God, Christ, and the Scriptures, &c., being only notional, is so far from being a comfort to them, that it is

[1] What is the scholar's knowledge of the strength, riches, glories, and sweetness of far countries, obtained by maps and books, to their knowledge that daily see and enjoy those things?

[2] *Surgunt indocti et cœlum rapiunt, et nos cum doctrinis* [*nostris, sine corde, ecce ubi volutamur in carne et sanguine*] *detrudimur in Gehennam.*—Augustine. [Conf. b. viii. c. 8.—G.]

their greatest torment; it is a worm that is eternally gnawing them, it makes them ten thousand times more miserable than otherwise they would be.[1] They are still a-crying out, Oh that our light, our light were put out! Oh that our knowledge, our knowledge were extinguished! Oh that we might but change rooms, change places with the heathens, with the barbarians, that never knew what we have known! Oh how happy would damned devils and apostates judge themselves in hell, if they should escape with those dreadful stripes that shall be eternally laid upon the backs of fools! Remember, reader, that a little heart-knowledge, a little experimental knowledge, is of greater efficacy and worth than the highest notions of the most acutest wits. He doth well that discourses of Christ, but he doth infinitely better that, by experimental knowledge, feeds and lives on Christ. It was not Adam's seeing, but his tasting, of forbidden fruit that made him miserable; and it is not your seeing of Christ, but your experimental tasting of Christ, that will make you truly happy. As no knowledge will save but what is experimental, so let no knowledge satisfy you but what is experimental, Ps. xxxiv. 8.

(4.) *The fourth property.* That knowledge that accompanies salvation is *a heart-affecting knowledge.* It affects the heart with Christ and all spiritual things. Oh, it doth wonderfully endear Christ and the things of Christ to the soul: Cant. ii. 5, 'Stay me with flagons, and comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love.' Oh, saith the spouse, my heart is taken with Christ, it is raised and ravished with his love; my soul is burning, my soul is beating towards Christ. Oh, none but Christ, none but Christ! I cannot live in myself, I cannot live in my duties, I cannot live in external privileges, I cannot live in outward mercies, I cannot live in common providences; I can live only in Christ, who is my life, my love, my joy, my crown, my all in all.[2] Oh, the hearing of Christ affects me, the seeing of Christ affects me, the taste of Christ affects me, the glimmerings of Christ affects me; the more I come to know him in his natures, in his names, in his offices, in his discoveries, in his appearances, in his beauties, the more I find my heart and affections to prize Christ, to run after Christ, to be affected with Christ, and to be wonderfully endeared to Christ, Cant. v. 10. 'He is white and ruddy, the chiefest of ten thousand,' Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26. The knowledge that she had of Christ did so affect and endear her heart to Christ, that she cannot but make use of all her rhetoric to set forth Christ in the most lovely and lively colours. Gal. vi. 14, 'God forbid that I should glory in anything, save in Christ Jesus.' Oh, God forbid that my heart should be affected or taken with anything in comparison of Christ. The more I know him, the more I like him; the more I know him, the more I love him; the more I know him, the more I desire him; the more I know him, the more my heart is knit unto him. His beauty is taking, his love is ravishing, his goodness is drawing, his manifestations are enticing, and his person is enamouring. His lovely looks please me, his pleasant voice delights me, his precious Spirit comforts me, his holy word rules me; and these things make

[1] James ii. 19. φρίσσουσι signifies to roar as the sea, and to tremble and shake horribly.

[2] *Plusquam mea, plusquam meos, plusquam me.*—Bernard. Col. iii. 3, 4. Ignatius cried out *Amor meus crucifixus*, my love, my love is crucified, &c.

Christ to be a heaven unto me. Oh, but now all that notional knowledge, that speculative knowledge, that leaves a man on this side salvation, never affects the heart; it never draws it, it never endears the heart to Christ, or to the precious things of Christ. Hence it is that such men, under all their notions, under all their light and knowledge, have no affection to Christ, no delight in Christ, no workings of heart after Christ.

Well, reader! remember this, if thy knowledge doth not now affect thy heart, it will at last with a witness afflict thy heart; if it doth not now endear Christ to thee, it will at last the more provoke Christ against thee; if it doth not make all the things of Christ to be very precious in thy eyes, it will at last make thee the more vile in Christ's eyes. A little knowledge that divinely affects the heart, is infinitely better than a world of that swimming knowledge that swims in the head, but never sinks down into the heart, to the bettering, to the warming, and to the affecting of it. Therefore strive not so much to know, as to have thy heart affected with what thou knowest; for heart-affecting knowledge is the only knowledge that accompanies salvation, that will possess thee of salvation.

(5.) *The fifth property.* That knowledge that accompanies salvation, is *a world-despising, a world-crucifying, and a world-contemning knowledge.*[1] It makes a man have low, poor, mean thoughts of the world; it makes a man slight it, and trample upon it as a thing of no value. That divine light that accompanies salvation, makes a man to look upon the world as mixed, as mutable, as momentary; it makes a man look upon the world as a liar, as a deceiver, as a flatterer, as a murderer, and as a witch that hath bewitched the souls of thousands to their eternal overthrow, by her golden offers and proffers. Divine knowledge put Paul upon trampling upon all the bravery and glory of the world, Philip. iii. 4–9. I shall only transcribe the seventh and eighth verses, and leave you to turn to the rest. 'But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung' (σκύβαλα, dog's dung or dog's meat, coarse and contemptible), 'that I may win Christ."[2] Divine knowledge raises his heart so high above the world, that he looks upon it with an eye of scorn and disdain, and makes him count it as an excrement, yea, as the very worst of excrements, as dogs' dung, as dogs' meat. Of the like import is that of Heb. x. 34, 'For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.' Divine knowledge will make a man rejoice, when his enemies make a bonfire of his goods. This man hath bills of exchange under God's own hand, to receive a pound for every penny, a million for every mite, that he loses for him. And this makes him to rejoice, and to trample upon all the glory of this world, as one did upon the philosopher's crown, Mat. xix. 27–30.

It was heavenly knowledge that made Moses to disdain and scorn the

[1] 2 Cor. v. 16. Divine knowledge made the apostle easily overlook all the world, as a man doth easily overlook other things, that looks to find a jewel, a pearl of price, &c.

[2] 'ις κυνας βαλειν, *Dicuntur quasi*; σκύβαλα *micæ quæ canibus projiciuntur.*

pomp and pleasures, the bravery and glory, the riches and advantages of Egypt and Ethiopia too, as some writers observe, Heb. xi. 24–26.[1] So when a beam of divine light had shined upon Zaccheus, Oh, how doth it work him to part with the world, to cast off the world, to slight it and trample upon it, as a thing of nought! 'And Zaccheus stood and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord! the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, for so much as he also is the son of Abraham,' Luke xix. 2–10. Before the candle of the Lord was set up in Zaccheus's soul, he dearly loved the world, he highly prized the world, he eagerly pursued after the world; he would have it right or wrong, his heart was set upon it, he was resolved to gather riches, though it was out of others' ruins. Ay, but when once he was divinely enlightened, he throws off the world, he easily parts with it, he sets very light by it, he looks with an eye of disdain upon it. His knowledge lifts him up above the smiles of the world, and above the frowns of the world; the world is no longer a snare, a bait, a temptation to him. He knows that it is more to be a son of Abraham, that is, to be taken into covenant with Abraham, to tread in the steps of Abraham's faith, as children tread in the steps of their fathers, and to lie and rest in the bosom of Abraham, as sons do in their fathers' bosoms, than to be rich, great, and honourable in the world, Rom. iv. 12, 16, and ix. i.[2] And this made him shake hands with the world, and say to it, as he to his idols, 'Get you hence, for what have I more to do with you?' Isa. xxx. 22; Hos. xiv. 8. Verily, that light, that knowledge, will never lead thee to heaven, it will never possess thee of salvation, that leaves thee under the power of the world, that leaves thee in league and friendship with the world, 1 John ii. 15; James iv. 4. If thy knowledge doth not put the world under thy feet, it will never put a crown of glory upon thy head. The church hath the moon under her feet, Rev. xii. 1, that is clothed with the sun, and that hath a crown upon her head.

Ah, knowing souls, knowing souls! do not deceive yourselves! Verily, if you are clothed with the comeliness and righteousness of the sun, which is Jesus Christ, and have a crown of victory and glory upon your heads, you will have the moon under your feet, you will tread and trample upon the trash of this world; all the riches, glories, and braveries of the world will be under your feet, in respect of your non-subjection to it and your holy contempt of it. If thy knowledge doth not enable thee to set thy feet upon those things that most set their hearts on, thou art undone for ever; thy knowledge will be so far from lifting thee up to heaven, that it will cast thee the lower into hell. Therefore let no knowledge satisfy thee, but that which lifts thee above the world, but that which weans thee from the world, but that which makes the world a footstool. This knowledge, this light will at last lead thee into everlasting light.

(6.) *The sixth property.* That knowledge that accompanies salvation is *soul-abasing, soul-humbling knowledge.* It makes a man very, very

[1] Greek, *μέγας γενόμενος*, 'grown a great one.'

[2] Many Turks and heathens will rise in judgment against those professors that act not as Zaccheus did.

little and low in his own eyes, as you may see in the most knowing apostle: Eph. iii. 8, 'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.' Paul's great light makes him very little. Though he was the greatest apostle, yet he looks upon himself as less than the least of all saints.[1]

Of all the evangelists,[2] John was most sharp-sighted, most eagle-eyed. He had the clearest sight of Christ; he lay most in the bosom of Christ; he knew most of the mind of Christ; he had the fullest manifestations and revelations of Christ; and yet oh how little, how low is John in his own eyes![3] John i. 26, 27, 'John answered them saying, I baptize with water; but there standeth one among you whom ye know not. He it is, who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.' In this phrase John alludes to the custom of the Hebrews. Those among them which were more noble than others, had boys who carried their shoes, and untied them when they laid them by. Oh! says John, I am a poor, weak, worthless creature; I am not worthy to be admitted to the meanest, to the lowest service under Christ; I am not worthy to carry his shoes, to unloose his shoes. After Peter had been in the mount, and instructed and enlightened by Christ, he cries out, 'Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man,' (Ανὴρ ἁμαρτωλός): a man, a sinner, a very mixture and compound of dirt and sin, of vileness and baseness, as you may see in comparing Mat. xvii. 1–5, Luke. v. 8. Abraham, under all his light and knowledge, acknowledges himself to be but dust and ashes, Gen. xviii. 27. Jacob, under all his knowledge, acknowledges himself to be less than the least of all mercies, Gen. xxxii. 10. David, under all his knowledge, acknowledges himself to be a worm, and no man, Ps. xxii. 6; he acknowledges himself to be foolish and ignorant, and as a beast before the Lord, Ps. lxxiii. 22. Job, under all his knowledge, acknowledges that he hath much reason to abhor himself in dust and ashes, Job xlii. 1–5. Agur was very good and his knowledge very great; and yet under all his knowledge, oh, how did he vilify, yea, nullify himself! 'Surely,' saith he, 'I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy,' Prov. xxx. 1, 4. The evangelical prophet Isaiah, under all his knowledge and visions, which were very great and glorious, acknowledges himself to be a man of unclean lips, and to dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips,' Isa. vi. 1–8. Divine and heavenly knowledge brings a man near to God; it gives a man the clearest and fullest sight of God; and the nearer any man comes to God, and the clearer visions he hath of God, the more low and humble will that man lie before God. None so humble as they that have nearest communion with God. The angels that are near unto him cover their faces with their wings, in token

[1] ἐλαχιστοτέρῳ, a comparative made a superlative.

[2] A strange oversight, by which Brooks confounds John the baptist with John the apostle and evangelist.—G.

[3] John in the Hebrew signifies the grace of God. This barbarian, said the philosopher, hath comprised more in three lines, than we have done in all our voluminous discourses, Mat. xi. 9–11. Christ wonderfully extols John. Says Christ, he is a prophet, yea, and more than a prophet, yea, a greater is not born of woman. But the greatest wonder of all is, that John is so low in his own eyes.

of humility. Divine knowledge makes a man look inwards; it anatomizes a man to himself; it is a glass that shews a man the spots of his own soul, and this makes him little and low in his own eyes.[1]

In the beams of this heavenly light, a Christian comes to see his own pride, ignorance, impatience, unworthiness, conceitedness, worthlessness, frowardness and nothingness.[2] That knowledge that swells thee will undo thee; that knowledge that puffs thee will sink thee; that knowledge that makes thee delightful in thy own eyes will make thee despicable in God's and good men's eyes: 1 Cor. viii. 1, 2, 'Knowledge puffeth up;' that is, notional knowledge, speculative knowledge, knowledge that ripens a man for destruction, that will leave him short of salvation. This knowledge puffs and swells a man, and makes him think himself something when he is nothing: 'And if any man thinketh that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know,' saith the apostle.[3]

Will not that philosopher rise in judgment against many of our high-flown professors, who swell, who look big, and talk big under their notional knowledge, which was very great: *Hoc tantum scio, quod nihil scio*, 'This only do I know, that I know nothing.'[4] Well! if that knowledge thou hast be that knowledge that accompanies salvation, it is a soul-humbling and a soul-abasing knowledge. If it be otherwise, then will thy knowledge make thee both a prisoner and a slave to the devil at once.

(7.) *The seventh property.* That knowledge that accompanies salvation is *an appropriating knowledge*, a knowledge that appropriates and applies spiritual and heavenly benefits to a man's own particular soul. As you may see in Job, 'my Redeemer lives,' and 'my witness is in heaven,' and 'my record is on high,' Job xix. 25, and xvi. 19; so David, 'the Lord is my portion,' Ps. xvi. 5. In Ps. xviii. 2, he useth this word of propriety eight times together, 'The Lord is *my* rock, and *my* fortress, and *my* deliverer; *my* God, *my* strength, in whom I will trust; *my* buckler, and the horn of *my* salvation, and *my* high tower.' So the spouse, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his,' Cant. ii. 16; so Thomas, 'My Lord and my God,' John xx. 28; so Paul, 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who hath loved me, and gave himself for me,' Gal. ii. 20. Applicatory knowledge is the sweetest knowledge; it revives the heart, it cheers the spirits, it rejoices the soul, it makes a man go singing to duties, and go singing to his grave, and singing to heaven;[5] whereas others, though gracious, that want this applicatory knowledge, have their hearts full of fears, and their lives full of sorrows, and so go sighing and mourning to heaven.[6]

[1] The light that the moon borrows from the sun discovers her own spots, and makes them the more conspicuous.

[2] When a beam of divine light had shined upon Augustine, he cried out, *Teneo in memoria, scribo in charta, sed non habeo in vita.*

[3] Many in these days are like the Chinese, who use to say, that they only did see with two eyes, all others but with one. [Chinese is spelled Chineses.—G.]

[4] Socrates in Plato throughout.—G.

[5] This is the pith and power of heavenly knowledge, to appropriate Christ to a man's self.

[6] Those that have a blemish in their eye think the sky to be ever cloudy; and nothing is more common to weak spirits, than to be criticising and contending, &c.

But lest any precious soul should turn this truth into a sword to cut and wound himself, let me desire him to remember, that every believer that hath such knowledge that accompanies salvation, hath not this applicatory knowledge, that makes so much for the soul's consolation, and that doth accompany some men's salvation, I say not all men's salvation. If thou findest thy knowledge to be such a knowledge as is before described in the six former particulars, though thou hast not attained to this applicatory knowledge, yet hast thou attained to that knowledge that accompanies salvation, and that will, my soul for thine, give thee a possession of salvation. This applicatory knowledge that accompanies salvation is only to be found in such eminent saints that are high in their communion with God, and that have attained some considerable assurance of their interest in God.[1] Many men's salvation is accompanied with an applicatory knowledge, but all men's salvation is not accompanied with an applicatory knowledge of man's particular interest in Christ, and those blessed favours and benefits that comes by him. Thy soul may be safe, and thy salvation may be sure, though thou hast not attained unto this appropriating knowledge, but thy life cannot be comfortable without this appropriating knowledge; therefore, if thou hast it not, labour for it as for life. It is a pearl of price, and if thou findest it, it will make thy soul amends for all thy digging, seeking, working, sweating, weeping, &c.[2]

(8.) *The eighth property.* That knowledge that accompanies salvation is accompanied and attended with these things:

[1.] *The first attendant.* That knowledge that accompanies salvation is attended *with holy endeavours, and with heavenly desires, thirstings, and pantings after a further knowledge of God, after clearer visions of God.* Prov. xv. 14, 'The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.' The Hebrew word that is here rendered '*seeketh*' [יבקש], is in *pihil*, and signifies an earnest and *diligent seeking;* to seek as an hungry man seeks for meat, or as a covetous man for gold, the more he hath, the more he desires; or as a condemned man seeks for his pardon, or as the diseased man seeks for his cure. The word in the text is from a root [בקש] that signifies *to seek studiously*, laboriously, industriously; to seek by suing, praying, inquiring, and walking up and down, that we may find what we seek: so in that Prov. xviii. 15, 'The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge' [תבקש].[3] A man that divinely knows, will set his heart and his ear, his inward and outward man, to know more and more. Divine knowledge is marvellous sweet, pleasing, comforting, satisfying, refreshing, strenghening, and supporting; and souls that have found the sweetness and usefulness of it, cannot but look and long, breathe and pant after more and more of it. The new-born babe doth not more naturally and more earnestly long for the breasts, than a soul that hath tasted that the Lord is gracious doth long for further and further tastes of God, 1 Peter ii. 2, 3. David, under all his knowledge, cries out, 'I

[1] It is commonly said of knowledge, *non habet inimicum præter ignorantiam*, that it hath not a greater enemy than ignorance, &c.

[2] A man doth not attain to health by reading Galen's or Hippocrates's aphorisms, but by the practical application of them to remove his diseases. You know how to apply it.

[3] Seeketh as men do for hid treasure.

am a stranger in the land, hide not thy commandments from me. Open mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law,' Ps. cxix. 18, 19. Job, under all his knowledge, which was very great, cries out, 'That which I see not, teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more,' Job xxxiv. 32.

[2.] *The second attendant.* A second thing that attends and accompanies that knowledge that accompanies salvation, is *holy endeavours to edify others, to instruct others, to enlighten and inform others in the knowledge of spiritual and heavenly things.* Heavenly light cannot be hid under a bushel. You may as easily hinder the sun from shining, as you may hinder a gracious soul from diffusing and spreading abroad that knowledge and light that God hath given him.[1] Divine light in the soul is like a light in a bright lantern, that shines forth every way, or like a light in a room, or on a beacon, that gives light to others. A Christian that divinely knows, is like the lamp in the story, that was always burning and shining, and never went out. So in Gen. xviii. 17, 19, 'And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do; for I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.' He that communicates his knowledge to others, shall be both of God's court and counsel; he shall lie in the bosom of God, he shall know the secrets of God. Prov. xv. 7, 'The lips of the wise disperse knowledge, but the heart of the foolish doth not so.' The Hebrew word that is here rendered, '*disperse*,' is a metaphor taken from seedsmen scattering abroad their seed in the furrows of the field. Heavenly knowledge is very spreading and diffusive; it is like the sun: the sun casteth his beams upward and downward, upon good and upon bad; so divine light in a gracious soul will break forth for the advantage and profit of friends and enemies, of those that be in a state of nature, and of those that be in a state of grace.[2] Acts iv. 18–20, 'And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach, in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard.' The bee doth store her hive out of all sorts of flowers for the common benefit; so a heavenly Christian sucks sweetness out of every mercy and every duty, out of every providence and out of every ordinance, out of every promise and out of every privilege, that he may give out the more sweetness to others.[3] *Lilmod lelammed*, 'we therefore learn, that we may teach,' is a proverb among the Rabbins. 'And I do therefore lay in, and lay up,' saith the heathen, 'that I may draw forth again, and lay out for the good of many.' This heathen [Socrates, &c.,] will rise in judgment against those that

[1] The way to get more knowledge, is to communicate that we have, according to that, *habenti dabitur*. Thus did Philip of Bethsaida, John i. 45; thus did the woman of Samaria, John iv. 28, 29; thus did the spouse, Cant. v. 10–16; thus did that seraphical preacher St Paul, Acts xxvi. 29.

[2] Augustine accounted nothing his own that he did not communicate to others.

[3] Opposition is the black angel that dogs the gospel at the heels. Divine knowledge is like new wine; it must have vent; it is heavenly fire that will break forth, Jer. v. 14, and xx. 2.

monopolise knowledge to themselves, that imprison their light within their own breasts, lest others should outshine and darken them.

Synesius speaks of some, who, having a treasure of rare abilities in themselves, would as soon part with their hearts as with their conceptions.[1] Verily, such men are far off from that knowledge that accompanies salvation; for that knowledge will make a man willing to spend and be spent for the edification, consolation, and salvation of others, 2 Cor. vi. 10; Gal. iv. 19. Prov. x. 21, 'The lips of the righteous feed many.'

[3.] *The third attendant.* A third thing that attends and accompanies that knowledge that accompanies salvation, is *holy zeal, courage, and resolution for God.* Divine knowledge makes a man as bold as a lion, Prov. xxviii. 1. Dan. xi. 32, 'And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall be corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.' So Prov. xxiv. 5, 'A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength,' or, 'He strengtheneth might,' as it is in the Hebrew.[2] Divine light makes a man full of mettle for God; it makes the soul divinely fearless and careless. Joshua xxiv. 15, 'Choose ye whom you will serve, I and my household will serve the Lord.' Come what will of it, we will never change our Master, nor quit his service.

Those beams of light that shined in upon Chrysostom, did so heat and warm his heart, that he stoutly tells Eudoxia the empress, that for her covetousness she would be called a second Jezebel; whereupon she sent him a threatening message, to which he returned this answer, 'Go tell her,' *nil nisi peccatum timeo,* 'I fear nothing but sin.'[3]

A prophetical man, in the ecclesiastical history, went to the pillars a little before an earthquake, and bid them stand fast, for they should shortly be shaken. Ah, Christians! there is an earthquake a-coming, and therefore as you would stand fast, as you would not have any earthquakes to make your hearts quake, get this zeal and courage that attends divine knowledge, and then you shall in the midst of all earthquakes be as mount Zion that cannot be removed, Ps. cxxv. 1, 2.

They that write the story of the travels of the apostles, report that Simon Zelotes preached here in England. Ah, England, England! if ever thou needest some zealots, it is now. Oh how secure, how dull, how drowsy, how sleepy in the midst of dangers art thou! For this and other of thy abominations, I desire my soul may weep in secret.[4]

[4.] *The fourth attendant.* The fourth and last thing that attends or accompanies that knowledge that accompanies salvation is, *faith and confidence in God.*[5] Ps. ix. 10, 'They that know thy name will

[1] Some such there be in these days. [Synesius, Opera 1612, folio.—G.]

[2] בעוז, in strength, מאמין כח

[3] [See Index under Chrysostom for other references to this.—G.] The heavenly light and knowledge that the prophets and apostles had, made them very zealous and courageous for their God, in the face of all difficulties and deaths, as might be shewed in very many scriptures.

[4] Epiphanius saith that Elijah sucked fire out of his mother's breasts. There are very few such Elijahs in these days.

[5] Knowledge and faith are twins, they live, and lodge, and act together; they are two lovers, that may be distinguished one from another, but they cannot be separated one from another.

put their trust in thee; for thou, Lord, hast not forgotten them that seek thee.' 2 Tim. i. 12, 'For the which cause I also suffer these things, nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.' I shall not enlarge upon this branch, because I shall speak at large concerning faith in the next particular.

And thus I have shewed you from the Scriptures what that knowledge is that accompanies salvation.

Now, the second thing that I am to shew you is, what that faith is that accompanies salvation.[1] I have formerly shewed you that faith doth accompany salvation, but now I will shew you what faith that is that doth accompany salvation; and that I shall do, by divine assistance, thus:

First, That faith that accompanies salvation, that comprehends salvation, that will possess a man of salvation, is known,

(1.) By the objects about which it is exercised. And,

(2.) By the properties of it.

First, By the objects about which it is exercised. Now the objects of faith are these.

(1.) *The first object of faith.* First, *The person of Christ* is the object of faith.[2] It is Christ in the promises that faith deals with. The promise is but the shell, Christ is the kernel; the promise is but the casket, Christ is the jewel in it; the promise is but the field, Christ is the treasure that is hid in that field; the promise is a ring of gold, and Christ is the pearl in that ring; and upon this sparkling, shining pearl, faith delights most to look. Cant. iii. 4, 'It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth. I held him, and I would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.' So Cant. vii. 5, 'The king is held in the galleries.' Faith hath two hands, and with both she lays earnest and fast hold on King Jesus. Christ's beauty and glory is very taking and drawing; faith cannot see it, but it will lay hold on it. Christ is the principal object about which faith is exercised, for the obtaining of righteousness and everlasting happiness. Acts xvi. 30, 31, 'And the jailor said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' Christ is in a world of scriptures held forth to be the object about which faith is most conversant; and the more faith is exercised upon the person of Christ, the more it buds and blossoms, like Aaron's rod. Faith looks upon him as the express image and character of his Father; faith beholds him as the chiefest of ten thousand; faith sees him to be the most glorious object in all the world.[3]

[1] *Fides est interdum id quod credimus, interdum id quo credimus.*—Augustine.

[2] Christ, as Redeemer, is the immediate object of faith, and God is the ultimate; for we believe in God through Christ, Rom. vi. 11; 1 Peter i. 21; 2 Cor. iii. 4. Faith's motto is, *Nolo benedictionem tuam sed te.*

[3] Not but that the Father is also the object of believers' faith, John xiv. 1. Isa. lxiii. 15, 16, with many other scriptures. But Christ is the object held forth by the Father for our faith to close with, in respect of our justification and salvation. God is *objectum ultimum fidei*, the ultimate or highest object of faith; and Christ *objectum mediatum*, the mediate object thereof.

(2.) *The second object of faith.* Secondly, The second object that faith is exercised about is *the righteousness of Jesus Christ*: Philip. iii. 9, 'I desire to be found in Christ, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' Paul would not be found in a legal righteousness, for he knew all his legal righteousness was but as 'filthy rags,' Isa. liv. 6. All his legal righteousness, sewed together, would but make up a coat of patches, a beggar's coat, that is good for nothing but to be cast away; therefore he desired to be found in the righteousness of Christ by faith. He knew that Christ's righteousness was a pure righteousness, a spotless righteousness, a matchless righteousness, a complete righteousness, a perfect righteousness, an absolute righteousness, a glorious righteousness. Faith loves to fix her eye upon that rich and royal robe, that blameless and spotless righteousness of Christ, wherewith the soul stands gloriously clothed before God, as being all fair, as being without spot or wrinkle in divine account.[1] Oh, it is the actings of faith upon this blessed object, this glorious righteousness of Christ, that makes a man familiar and bold with God, that makes a man active and resolute for God, that strengthens a man against temptations, that supports a man under afflictions, that makes a man long for the day of his dissolution, that makes him prefer his coffin above a prince's crown, the day of his death above the day of his birth; that makes him triumph over sin and Satan, hell and wrath. Adam's righteousness was but the righteousness of a creature, but the righteousness about which faith is exercised is the righteousness of a God,[2] Rom. iii. 21, and x. 3. Adam's righteousness was a mutable righteousness, a righteousness that might be sinned away; but the righteousness that a believer's faith is exercised about is an everlasting righteousness, a righteousness that cannot be sinned away, 2 Cor. v. 21: Prov. viii. 18. *vide* Dan. ix. 24, 'Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy;' Ps. cxix. 142, 'Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.' The righteousness of Adam was a righteousness subject to shaking, and we know that Satan did shake all his righteousness about his ears, as I may say. Oh but that glorious righteousness about which faith is conversant is an unshaken righteousness, a righteousness that cannot be shaken: Ps. xxxvi. 6, 'Thy righteousness is like the great mountains,' or rather, as it is in the Hebrew, 'Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God.[3] What more stable than a mountain! and what mountain so stable as the mountain of God! The mountains cannot be shaken, no more can that glorious righteousness of Christ, about which a believer's faith is exercised. Adam's righteousness was a low righteousness, a righteous-

[1] Col. ii. 10; Cant. iv. 7; Rev. xiv. 5; Eph. v. 27.

[2] The righteousness of angels is but the righteousness of creatures, but the righteousness that the saints are clothed with is the very righteousness of God; and in this respect the meanest saint is more excellent and glorious than the most glorious angel.

[3] כהררי־אל. The Hebrew useth to note excellent things, by adding the name of God; as cedars of God, Ps. lxxx. 10; rivers of God, Ps. lxv. 19; wrestlings of God, Gen. xxx. 8; harps of God, Rev. xv. 2.

ness within his own reach, and a righteousness within Satan's reach; it was not so high, but Adam could lay his hand upon it, as I may say; it was not so high, but Satan could reach to the top of it, yea, to the over-topping of it, as we have all found by woful experience. Oh, but that righteousness that faith is conversant about, is a righteousness of such a height, as that neither Satan nor the world can reach to it: Ps. lxxi. 15, 16, 19, 'My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof. I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only. Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hath done great things: O God, who is like unto thee?' This glorious righteousness of Christ, about which faith is busied, is called the righteousness of faith, because faith apprehends it, and applies it, and feeds upon it, and delights in it, Rom. iii. 28. Rom. iv. 13, 'For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.' Chap. ix. 30, 'What shall we say then? That the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.' The righteousness of Christ about which faith is employed, is called the righteousness of faith, because faith puts on this righteousness upon the soul. Faith wraps the soul up in this righteousness of Christ, and so justifieth it before God instrumentally.[1] The actings of faith on this glorious righteousness doth most strengthen the soul: Isa. xlv. 24, 'Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.' The actings of faith on this blessed righteousness, doth most glad and rejoice the soul: Isa. lxi. 10, 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garment of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.' The actings of faith upon this complete righteousness of Christ, renders souls just and righteous, pure and holy, in the account of God: Rom. x. 4, 'For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth.' Christ fulfils the law for believers, and they by believing do fulfil the law in him; and so Christ by doing, and they by believing in him that doth it, do fulfil the law, and so are reputed fair and spotless, complete and perfect, before the throne of God. Faith's putting this righteousness on the soul, brings down blessings upon the soul. When Jacob had put on his elder brother's garment, he carried the blessing away. The actings of faith upon this peerless righteousness of Christ, brings down the blessing of peace, and the blessing of joy, and the blessing of remission of sins; and, in a word, all other blessings that contributes to the making us blessed here and happy hereafter, &c.

(3.) *The third object of faith.* Thirdly, The third object that faith is exercised about is, *the precious promises,* which are a Christian's

[1] Rom. x. 6, but the righteousness which is of faith, *i. e.* which is apprehended by faith, &c. Mark, faith is only the instrument; it cannot be the substance of that righteousness, as it were, whereby we are justified and saved, (1.) because it is imperfect; (2.) the acts of faith are transient; (3.) then should men have something within them whereof to boast; (4.) faith is a part of inherent holiness; (5.) then some men should be justified more, and some less, according to the different measures of faith in them, Gen. xxvii. 15; Rom. v. 1; 1 Peter i. 8; Acts x. 43.

magna charta.[1] As every precious stone hath an egregious[2] virtue in it, so hath every promise. The promises are a precious book, every leaf drops myrrh and mercy; and upon these precious promises, precious faith looks and lives. From these breasts faith sucks comfort and sweetness. Ps. cxix. 49, 50, 'Remember thy word (that is, thy promise) unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me.' So in Ps. xxvii. 13, 'I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living;' Heb. xi. 13, 'These all died in faith (or according to faith), not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them' (or, as the Greek hath it, *saluted* them by faith; they kissed the promises, and kissed Christ in the promises[3]), 'and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.' It would be an endless thing to shew you how the faith of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and other saints have been acted and exercised upon promises of sanctification, upon promises of justification, upon promises of salvation, upon promises of glorification, upon promises of protection, upon promises for direction, upon promises for supportation, &c. Look, as the lamp lives upon the oil, and the child upon the breasts, so doth faith upon the promises.

For the further advantage and comfort of your souls in eyeing the promises, let me give you these two sweet hints:

First, In your looking upon the promises, mind most, eye most, spiritual promises, absolute promises, viz., those and such like that you see in the margin.[4] These spiritual and absolute promises are of nearest and greatest concernment to you; these carry in them most of the heart of Christ, the love of Christ, the good-will of Christ; these are of greatest use to satisfy you, and to settle you when you are wavering; to support you when you are falling; to reduce you when you are wandering; to comfort you when you are fainting; to counsel you when you are staggering, &c. Therefore make these your choicest and your chiefest companions, especially when it is night within your souls, when you are sensible of much sin and but a little grace, of much corruption but of little consolation, of much deadness but of little quickness, of much hardness but of little tenderness, of many fears and but a little faith. The Jews under the law had more temporal promises than spiritual, but we under the gospel have far more spiritual promises than temporal; therefore sit down at this fire, and be warmed; drink of these springs, and be satisfied; taste of these delicates, and be cheered. Let the eye of faith be cast upon all the promises, but fixed upon spiritual promises, upon absolute promises; they will have the greatest influence upon the heart to holiness, and to prepare it for everlasting happiness.[5]

[1] 2 Peter i. 4. Mark, the whole word of God is the object of faith; but the promises, more especially, are the prime object about which faith is most conversant.

[2] Spelled 'ogregious;' meaning 'peculiar.'—G.

[3] κατὰ πίστιν, *i. e.* persevering in faith, ἀσπασάμενοι. Some think that it is an allusion to the custom of saluting one another, by embracing or laying hold of each other.

[4] Jer. xxxii. 40, 41; Ezek. xi. 19, 20; xxxvi. 25–27; Isa. xlii. 1; Ezek. xx. 41–43; Ps. xci. 15; Isa. lxv. 24; Jer. xxxiii. 3; Isa. xxxii. 15; Ezek. xxxiv. 30, 31, with many others of the like import.

[5] Spiritual and absolute promises are the most precious mines to enrich you; in them you will find the greatest pearls of price.

Look not only upon some of the riches, the jewels, the pearls, that be wrapped up in the promises, but enlarge and expatiate your understandings to an effectual contemplation of all those riches and treasures that God hath laid up in the promises. Cast not the eye of your faith only upon one beam of the sun, but endeavour to see all the beams of the sun; look not upon one branch of the tree of life, but upon every branch of that tree; look not upon one bunch of the grapes of Canaan, but look upon the whole land.[1] As understanding heirs, when they come to read over their evidences and writings, they will see what they have in houses, what in goods, what in lands, what in money, what in jewels, what at home, what abroad; they will not sit down and say, Well! we find in our evidences, that such and such land is ours, and look no further; no, no, they will look all over, and take exact notice of everything; they will say, We have so much land, and so much money, &c. O beloved, there is much marrow and fatness, there is much honey and sweetness, much grace and glory wrapped up in the promises. Oh press them, and oppress[2] them till you have got forth all the riches and sweetness that is in them.

Ah, Christians! did you this, God would be more honoured, the promises more prized, your graces more strengthened, your fears more abated, your hearts more warmed and engaged, and your lives more regulated, and Satan more easily and frequently vanquished. And so much for this third object, about which faith is exercised.

(4.) Fourthly, *The fourth object of faith.* The fourth object and last that I shall mention that faith is set and fixed upon is, *that glory, blessedness, and life, which God hath laid up for them that love him.*[3] The things of eternity are the greatest things, they are the most excellent things. They are most excellent in their natures, in their causes, in their operations, in their effects, in their ends; and upon these faith looks and lives. Faith realiseth things; it makes absent things present. 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,' Heb. xi. 1.[4] Faith makes absent glory present, absent riches present, absent pleasures present, absent favours present. Faith brings an invisible God, and sets him before the soul. Moses by faith saw him that was invisible. Faith brings down the recompence of reward, and sets it really though spiritually before the soul. Faith sets divine favour before the soul. It sets peace, it sets pardon of sin, it sets the righteousness of Christ, it sets the joy of heaven, it sets salvation, before the soul; it makes all these things very near and obvious to the soul: 'Faith is the evidence of things not seen.'[5] Faith makes invisible things visible, absent things present, things that are afar off to be very near unto the soul, by convincing demonstrations, by arguments and reasons drawn from the word, as the Greek word signifies: 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things

[1] Haman took notice, yea, and would have his friends take notice, of all his greatness, honours, and riches, Esther v. 10–12; and will not you stir up your hearts to see all those riches and pleasures that be in precious promises? [2] Qu. 'express'?—ED.

[3] 2 Tim. iv. 8. Faith ante-dates glory.

[4] ὑπόστασις, the substance, *i. e.* that which gives a substantial being to the things of eternal life. Faith alters the tenses; it puts the future into the present, Ps. lx. 6; Heb. xi. 2. [5] ἔλεγχος, the index, or clear conviction by disputation.

which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.'[1] Faith trades in invisible things, in eternal things. Its eye is always upwards, like the fish called by Galen *uranoscopos*,[2] that hath but one eye, and yet looks continually up to heaven.[3] Faith enters within the veil, and fixes her eye upon those glorious things of eternity, that are so many that they exceed number, so great that they exceed measure, so precious that they are above all estimation. Says faith, The spangled firmament is but the footstool of my Father's house; and if the footstool, the outside, be so glorious, oh how glorious is his throne! Verily, in heaven there is that life that cannot be expressed, that light that cannot be comprehended, that joy that cannot be fathomed, that sweetness that cannot be dissipated, that feast that cannot be consumed; and upon these pearls of glory I look and live, says faith.

And thus I have shewed you the choice and precious objects about which that faith is exercised that accompanies salvation.

I shall now in the next place shew you the properties of that faith that accompanies salvation, and they are these that follow.

[1.] *The first property* of that faith that accompanies salvation is this: *it puts forth itself into vital operation.*[4] It makes a man full of life and activity for God; it will make a man diligent and venturous in the work and ways of God. Faith is a most active quality in itself, and so it makes a Christian most active. It is a doing thing, and it makes the person doing. Faith will not suffer the soul to be idle. Faith is like the virtuous woman in the last of the Proverbs, who puts her hand to every work, who would suffer none of her handmaids to be idle. Faith puts the soul upon grieving for sin, upon combating with sin, upon weeping over sin, upon trembling at the occasions of sin, upon resisting temptations that lead to sin, upon fighting it out to the death with sin, Zech. xii. 10. Faith puts a man upon walking with God, upon waiting on God, upon working for God, upon wrestling with God, upon bearing for God, and upon parting with anything for God.[5] Faith makes religious duties to be easy to the soul, to be delightful to the soul, to be profitable to the soul. Faith makes the soul to be serious and conscientious in doing, to be careful and faithful in doing, to be delightful and cheerful in doing, to be diligent and faithful in doing.[6] That faith that is not a working faith is no faith; that faith that is not a working faith is a dead faith; that faith that is not a working faith is a deluding faith; that faith that is not a working faith is a worthless faith; that faith that is not a working faith will leave a man short of heaven and happiness in the latter day. Faith that accompanies salvation is better at doing than at thinking, at obeying than at disputing, at walking than at talking: Titus iii. 8, 'This is a faithful saying; and these things I

[1] σκοπούντων, to look with a diligent eye, as men do at the mark whereat they shoot.

[2] οὐρανοσκόπος, *as before.*—G.

[3] Heb. vi. 19; Rom. viii. 18; Heb. x. 34; Acts vii. 55, 56. An adopted heir to a crown cannot but have his heart at court; his mind and thoughts will be upon his future glorious condition: he will be still a-creating ideas and images of it.

[4] *Quid est igitur fides? Omnino fideliter hominem Christo credere*, i. e. *Fidelem esse, hoc est fideliter Dei mandata servare*, saith one.

[5] The 11th of the Hebrews is a full proof of these things; Gal. ii. 20.

[6] James ii. 17, to the end. Faith looks to precepts as well as to promises: Ps. cxix. 66, 'Teach me good judgment and knowledge; for I have believed thy commandments.'

will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.'[1] Faith will make a man endeavour to be good, yea, to be best, at everything he undertakes. It is not leaves but fruit, not words but works, that God expects; and if we cross his expectation, we frustrate our own salvation, we further our own condemnation. Faith makes the soul much in doing, abundant in working, and that partly by persuading the soul that all its works, all its duties and services, shall be owned and accepted of God, as in Isa. lvi. 7, 'Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.' Faith assures the soul that every prayer, every sigh, every groan, every tear is accepted. And this makes the soul pray much, and sigh much, and mourn much.

Again, faith spreads the promises of divine assistance before the soul. Oh! says faith, here, O soul, is assistance suitable to the work required. And this makes a man work, as for life; it makes a man work and sweat, and sweat and work.

Again, faith sets the recompence, the reward, before the soul, Heb. xi. 25, 26. Oh! says faith, look here, soul, here is a great reward for a little work; here is great wages for weak and imperfect services; here is an infinite reward for a finite work. Work, yea, work hard, says faith, O believing soul, for thy actions in passing pass not away; every good work is as a grain of seed for eternal life. There is a resurrection of works as well as of persons, and in that day wicked men shall see that it is not a vain thing to serve God; they shall see the most doing souls to be the most shining souls, to be the most advanced and rewarded. Oh the sight of this crown, of this recompence, makes souls to abound in the work of the Lord, they knowing that their labour is not in vain in the Lord,[2] 1 Cor. xv. 58.

Again, faith draws from Christ's fulness; it sucks virtue and strength from Christ's breasts. Faith looks upon Christ as a head, and so draws from him; it looks upon Christ as a husband, and so draws from him; it looks upon him as a fountain, and so draws from him; it looks upon him as a sea, as an ocean of goodness, and so draws from him; it looks upon him as a father, Col. i. 19, and so draws from him; it looks upon him as a friend, and so draws from him, John i. 16. And this divine power and strength sets the soul a-working hard for God; it makes the soul full of motion, full of action. In a word, faith is such a working grace as sets all other graces a-working. Faith hath an influence upon every grace; it is like a silver thread that runs through a chain of pearl; it puts strength and vivacity into all other virtues. Love touched by a hand of faith flames forth; hope fed at faith's table grows strong, and casts anchor within the veil, Acts v. and xvi.; Rom. xv. 13. Joy, courage, and zeal being smiled upon by faith, is made invincible and

[1] φροντίζωσι. The word signifies to bend their wits, and beat their brains, to maintain good works, Isa. lxv. 24; Gen. iv. 4; 2 Peter iii. 11; Cant. ii. 14. Luther prefers the meanest work of a country Christian or poor maid above all the victories and triumphs of Alexander and of Julius Cæsar, Mat. xxvii. 66; Isa. xli. 10, 11; Heb. xiii. 5, 6; Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, &c.

[2] One good work of a Christian is more precious than heaven and earth, saith Luther, Rev. xiv. 13.

unconquerable, &c. Look, what oil is to the wheels, what weights are to the clock, what wings are to the bird, what sails are to the ship, that faith is to all religious duties and services, except it be winter with the soul.

And thus you see, that that faith that accompanies salvation is a working faith, a lively faith, and not such a dead faith as most please and deceive themselves with for ever.

[2.] *The second property* of that faith that accompanies salvation is this: *it is of a growing and increasing nature.* It is like the waters of the sanctuary, that rise higher and higher, as Ezekiel speaks. It is like a tender plant, that naturally grows higher and higher; it is like a grain of mustard-seed, which though it be the least of all seeds, yet by a divine power it grows up beyond all human expectations, Mat. xiii. 32. Faith is imperfect, as all other graces are, but yet it grows and increases gradually:[1] Rom. i. 17, 'For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.' As a gracious soul is still a-adding knowledge to knowledge, love to love, fear to fear, zeal to zeal, so he is a-adding faith to faith. A gracious soul knows, that if he be rich in faith he cannot be poor in other graces; he knows the growth of faith will be as 'the former and the latter rain' to all other graces; he knows that there is no way to outgrow his fears but by growing in faith; he knows that all the pleasant fruits of paradise, viz., joy, comfort, and peace, flourishes as faith flourishes; he knows that he hath much work upon his hands, that he hath many things to do, many temptations to withstand, many mercies to improve, many burdens to bear, many corruptions to conquer, many duties to perform. And this makes the believing soul thus to reason with God: Ah, Lord! whatever I am weak in, let me be strong in faith; whatever dies, let faith live; whatever decays, let faith flourish.[2] Lord, let me be low in repute, low in parts, low in estate, so thou wilt make me high in faith. Lord! let me be poor in anything, poor in everything, so thou wilt make me rich in faith. Lord! let the eye of faith be more opened, let the eye of faith be more quick-sighted, let the eye of faith be the more raised, and it shall be enough to me, though Joseph be not, though Benjamin be not.

It was the glory of the Thessalonians, that 'their faith grew exceedingly,' 2 Thess. i. 3. A growth in faith will render a man glorious in life, lovely in death, and twice blessed in the morning of the resurrection.[3] So will not a growth in honours, a growth in riches, a growth in notions, a growth in opinions. That faith that accompanies salvation unites the soul to Christ, and keeps the soul up in communion with Christ. And from that union and communion that the soul hath with Christ, flows such a divine power and virtue, that causes faith to grow.[4]

[1] The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, Ps. xcii. 12–14. Now, the palm tree never loseth his leaf or fruit, saith Pliny.

[2] An old man being once asked if he grew in grace, answered, Yea, doubtless I believe I do; for God hath said in his word that we shall flourish and bring forth fruit in old age. *Ille non est bonus, qui non vult esse melior.*

[3] That is but a wooden leg that grows not, no more is that any more but a wooden faith, a counterfeit faith, that grows not.

[4] The union between Christ and the saints is the nearest and the highest union; and

Yet that no weak believer may be stumbled, or sadded, let them remember,

(1.) That though that faith that accompanies salvation be a growing faith, yet there are some certain seasons and cases wherein a man may decay in his faith, and wherein he may not have the exercise and the actings of his faith. This blessed babe of grace may be cast into a deep slumber; this heavenly pearl may be so buried under the thick clay of this world, and under the ashes of corruption and temptation, as that for a time it may neither stir, nor grow, as might be shewn in Abraham, David, Solomon, Peter, and others.

(2.) Secondly, Remember this, that the strongest faith at times is subject to shakings, as the strongest men are to faintings, as the stoutest ships are to tossings, as the wisest men are to doubtings, as the brightest stars are to twinklings, &c. Therefore, if at certain times thou shouldst not be sensible of the growth of thy faith, yet do not conclude that thou hast no faith. Faith may be in the habit when it is not in the act. There may be life in the root of the tree, when there is neither leaves, blossoms, nor fruit upon the tree; the life that is in the root will shew itself at the spring, and so will the habits of faith break forth into acts, when the Sun of righteousness shall shine forth, and make it a pleasant spring to thy soul. And thus much for this second particular.

[3.] *The third property* of that faith that accompanies salvation is this: *it makes those things that are great and glorious in the world's account to be very little and low in the eyes of the believer.* Faith makes a believer to live in the land of promise as in a strange country, Heb. xi. 9. It is nothing to live as a stranger in a strange land, but to live as a stranger in the land of promise, this is the excellency and glory of faith.

Faith will make a man set his feet where other men sets their hearts. Faith looks with an eye of scorn and disdain upon the things of this world. What, says faith, are earthly treasures to the treasures of heaven? What are stones to silver, dross to gold, darkness to light, hell to heaven? Mat. vi. 19, 20. No more, says faith, are all the treasures, pleasures, and delights of this world, to the light of thy countenance, to the joy of thy Spirit, to the influences of thy grace, Ps. iv. 6, 7. I see nothing, says David, in this wide world, only 'thy commandments are exceeding broad.' Faith makes David account his crown nothing, his treasures nothing, his victories nothing, his attendants nothing, &c. Faith will make a man write *nothing* upon the best of worldly things; it will make a man trample upon the pearls of this world, as upon dross and dung, Heb. xi. 24–26. Faith deadens a man's heart to the things of this world: 'I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me,' says Paul, Philip. iii. 8; Gal. vi. 14. This world, says faith, is not my house, my habitation, my home; I look for a better country, for a better city, for a better home, 2 Cor. v. 1, 2. He that is adopted heir to a crown, a kingdom, looks with an eye of scorn and disdain upon everything below a kingdom, below a crown. Faith tells the soul that

so it advantages their graces, and advances them to a higher degree of happiness than any other creatures whatsoever, John xvii. Christ would have his people one with him and the Father, though not essentially, nor personally, yet really and spiritually.

it hath a crown, a kingdom in reversion; and this makes the soul to set light by the things of this world, 2 Tim. iv. 8. Faith raises and sets the soul high. 'And hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,' saith the apostle, Eph. ii. 6. Faith makes a man live high: 'Our conversation is in heaven,' Philip. iii. 20; and the higher any man lives, the less, the lower will the things of this world be in his eye. The fancy of Lucian is very pleasant, who placeth Charon on the top of an high hill, viewing all the affairs of men, and looking on their greatest, richest, and most glorious cities, as little birds' nests. Faith sets the soul upon the hill of God, the mountain of God, that is, a high mountain; and from thence, faith gives the soul a sight, a prospect of all things here below. And, ah! how like birds' nests do all the riches, braveries, and glories of this world look, and appear to them, that faith hath set upon God's high hill. Faith having set Luther upon this high hill, he protests that God should not put him off with these poor low things. Faith set Moses high, it set him among invisibles; and that made him look upon all the treasures, pleasures, riches, and glories of Egypt, as little birds' nests, as mole-hills, as dross and dung, as things that were too little and too low for him to set his heart upon. Verily, when once faith hath given a man a sight, a prospect of heaven, all things on earth will be looked upon as little and low. And so much for this third property of faith.

[4.] *The fourth property* of that faith that accompanies salvation is this: *it purifies the heart, it is a heart-purifying faith.* 'Purifying their hearts by faith,' Acts xv. 9. Faith hath two hands, one to lay hold on Christ, and another to sweep the heart, which is Christ's house. Faith knows that Christ is of a dove-like nature; he loves to lie clean and sweet. Faith hath a neat housewife's hand, as well as an eagle's eye. Faith is as good at purging out of sin, as it is at discovering of sin. There is a cleansing quality in faith, as well as a healing quality in faith. Sound faith will purge the soul from the love of sin, from a delight in sin, and from the reign and dominion of sin, Ezek. xvi. 'Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace,' Rom. vi. 14, 21. Now faith purges and cleanseth the heart from sin, sometimes by pressing and putting God to make good the promises of sanctification. Faith takes that promise in Jer. xxxiii. 8, 'And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me;'[1] and that promise in Micah vii. 19, 'He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the bottom of the sea;' and that promise in Ps. lxv. 3, 'Iniquities prevail against me; as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away;' and that promise in Isa. i. 25, 'And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin;' and spreads them before the Lord, and will never leave urging and pressing, seeking and suing, till God makes them good. Faith makes the soul divinely impudent, divinely shameless. Lord! says faith, are not these thine own words? Hast thou said it,

[1] וטהרתים, I will purify them, is an allusion to the purifications prescribed in the law for the cleansing of polluted persons, till which purifications were performed they could not be admitted into the camp or congregation.

and shall it not come to pass? Art thou not a faithful God? Is not thine honour engaged to make good the promises that thou hast made? Arise, O God, and let my sins be scattered; turn thy hand upon me, and let my sins be purged. And thus faith purifies the heart.

Again, sometimes faith purifies the heart from sin, by engaging against sin in Christ's strength, as David engaged against Goliath, 1 Sam. xvii. 47, not in his own strength, but in the strength and name of the Lord of hosts. Faith leads the soul directly to God, and engages God against sin, so as that the combat, by the wisdom of faith, is changed, and made now rather between God and sin than between sin and the soul; and so sin comes to fall before the power and glorious presence of God. That is a choice word, Ps. lxi. 2, 'From the ends of the earth will I cry to thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.' Look, as a child that is set upon by one that is stronger than he, cries out to his father to help him, to stand by him, and to engage for him against his enemy; so faith, being sensible of its own weakness and inability to get the victory over sin, cries out to Christ, and engages Christ, who is stronger than the strong man, and so Christ binds the strong man, and casts him out. Faith tells the soul, that all purposes, resolutions, and endeavours, without Christ be engaged, will never set the soul above its sins, they will never purify the heart from sin; therefore faith engages Christ, and casts the main of the work upon Christ, and so it purges the soul from sin. Luther reports of Staupicius, a German divine, that he acknowledged, before he came to understand the free and powerful grace of Christ, that he vowed and resolved an hundred times against some particular sin, and could never get power over it; he could never get his heart purified from it, till he came to see that he trusted too much to his own resolutions, and too little to Jesus Christ; but when his faith had engaged Christ against his sin, he had the victory.

Again, faith purifies the heart from sin, by the application of Christ's blood. Faith makes a plaster of Christ's blessed blood, and lays it on upon the soul's sores, and so cures it. Faith makes a heavenly vomit of this blessed blood, and gives it to the soul, and so makes it cast up that poison that it hath drunk in.[1] Faith tells the soul, that it is not all the tears in the world, nor all the water in the sea, that can wash away the uncleanness of the soul; it is only the blood of Christ that can make a blackmoor white; it is only the blood of Christ that can cure a leprous Naaman, that can cure a leprous soul. This fountain of blood, says faith, is the *only* fountain for Judah and Jerusalem to wash themselves, to wash their hearts from all uncleanness and filthiness of flesh and spirit, Zech. xiii. 1. Those spots a Christian finds in his own heart, can only be washed out in the blood of the Lamb, by a hand of faith.

Again, faith purifieth the soul from sin, by putting the soul upon heart-purifying ordinances, and by mixing and mingling itself with ordinances: 'The word profited them not,' saith the apostle, 'because it was not mixed with faith in them that heard it,' Heb. iv. 2. Faith is such an excellent ingredient, that it makes all potions work for the

[1] It is the excellency of faith, that it can turn the blood of Christ both into food and into physic.

good of the soul, for the purifying of the soul, and for the bettering of the soul; and no potion, no means will profit the soul, if this heavenly ingredient be not mixed with it. Now, faith puts a man upon praying, upon hearing, upon the fellowship of the saints, upon public duties, upon family duties, and upon closet duties; and faith in these comes and joins with the soul, and mixes herself with these soul-purifying ordinances, and so makes them effectual for the purifying of the soul more and more from all filthiness and uncleanness.[1] Faith puts out all her virtue and efficacy in ordinances, to the purging of souls from their dross and tin; not that faith in this life shall wholly purify the soul from the being of sin, or from the motions or operations of sin, no;[2] for then we should have our heaven in this world, and then we might bid ordinances adieu; but that faith that accompanies salvation doth naturally purify and cleanse the heart from the remainders of sin by degrees. Sound faith is still a-making the heart more and more neat and clean, that the king of glory may delight in his habitation, that he may not remove his court, but may abide with the soul for ever. And thus you see that that faith that accompanies salvation is a heart-purifying faith.

(5.) *The fifth property* of that faith that accompanies salvation is this: *it is soul-softening, it is soul-mollifying.* Oh nothing breaks the heart of a sinner like faith. Peter believes soundly, and weeps bitterly, Mat. xxvi. 75; Mary Magdalene believes much, and weeps much, Luke vii. 44. Faith sets a wounded Christ, a bruised Christ, a despised Christ, a pierced Christ, a bleeding Christ before the soul, and this makes the soul sit down and weep bitterly: 'I will pour upon the house of David, the Spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him' (all gospel-mourning flows from believing), 'as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born,' Zech. xii. 10, &c. Oh! the sight of those wounds that their sins have made, will wound their hearts through and through; it will make them lament over Christ with a bitter lamentation. They say nothing will dissolve the adamant but the blood of a goat. Ah! nothing will kindly, sweetly, and effectually break the hardened heart of a sinner, but faith's beholding the blood of Christ trickling down his sides. Pliny reports of a serpent, that when it stings, it fetches all the blood out of the body;[3] but it was never heard that ever any sweat blood but Christ, and the very thoughts of this makes the believing soul to sit down sweating and weeping. That Christ should love man when he was most unlovely, that man's extreme misery should but inflame Christ's bowels of love and mercy, this melts the believing soul. That Christ should leave the eternal bosom of his Father; that he that was equal with God should come in the form of a servant; that he that was clothed with glory, and born a king, should be wrapped in rags; that he that the heaven of heavens could not contain should be cradled in a manger; that from his cradle to his cross, his whole life should be

[1] As Christ came and joined himself to his disciples.

[2] Sin is like the wild fig tree, or ivy in the wall, cut off stump, body, bough, and branches, yet some sprigs or other will sprout out again, till the wall be plucked down, &c.

[3] Nat. Hist., *sub serpente*, &c.—G.

a life of sorrows and sufferings; that the judge of all flesh should be condemned; that the Lord of life should be put to death; that he that was his Father's joy should in anguish of spirit cry out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' that that head that was crowned with honour should be crowned with thorns; that those eyes that were as a flame of fire, that were clearer than the sun, should be closed up by the darkness of death; that those ears which were wont to hear nothing but hallelujahs should hear nothing but blasphemies; that that face that was white and ruddy should be spit upon by the beastly Jews; that that tongue that spake as never man spake, yea, as never angel spake, should be accused of blasphemy; that those hands which swayed both a golden sceptre and an iron rod, and those feet that were as fine brass, should be nailed to the cross; and all this for man's transgression, for man's rebellion: Oh! the sight of these things, the believing of these things, the acting of faith on these things, makes a gracious soul to break and bleed, to sigh and groan, to mourn and lament. That faith that accompanies salvation is more or less a heart-breaking, a heart-melting faith.

(6.) *The sixth property* of that faith that accompanies salvation is this: *it is a world-conquering faith, it is a world-overcoming faith.* 1 John v. 4, 'For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' Faith overcomes the frowning world, the fawning world, the tempting world, and the persecuting world, and that it doth thus:

(1.) Faith, by uniting the soul to Christ, doth interest the soul in all the victories and conquests of Christ, and so makes the soul a conqueror with Christ: John xvi. 33, 'These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace; in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.' We have to deal but with a conquered enemy; our Jesus hath given the world a mortal wound; we have nothing to do but to set our feet upon a subdued enemy, and to sing it out with the apostle, 'Over all these we are more than conquerors,' Rom. viii. 37.

(2.) Faith overcomes the world by out-bidding sights; faith out-bids the world, and so makes the soul victorious. The world set honours, pleasures, &c., before Moses, but his faith out-bid the world. It presents the recompence of reward, it brings down all the glory, pleasures, and treasures of heaven, of that other world, and sets them before the soul; and so it overtops and overcomes the world by out-bidding it. So Christ, 'for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame,' Heb. xii. 2.

(3.) Faith overcomes the world by telling the soul that all things are its own. Says faith, This God is thy God, this Christ is thy Christ, this righteousness is thy righteousness, this promise is thy promise, this crown is thy crown, this glory is thy glory, these treasures are thy treasures, these pleasures are thy pleasures. 'All things are yours,' saith the apostle, 'things present are yours, and things to come are yours,' 1 Cor. iii. 22. Thus the faith of the martyrs acted, and so made them victorious over a tempting and a persecuting world, Heb. xi. 35.

(4.) Faith overcomes the world by valuing the things of this world as they are. Most men overvalue them, they put too great a price

upon them, they make the world a god, and then they cry, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians.' Oh but faith now turns the inside of all creatures outward, faith presents all worldly things as impotent, as mixed, as mutable, as momentary to the soul, and so makes the soul victorious. Faith makes a man to see the prickles that be in every rose, the thorns that be in every crown, the scabs that be under every gown, the poison that is in the golden cup, the snare that is in the delicate dish, the spot that is in the shining pearl, and so makes a Christian count and call all these things, as indeed they are, 'vanity of vanities,' and so the believing soul slights the world, and tramples upon it as dung and dross. And lastly,

(5.) Faith overcomes the world, by presenting Jesus Christ to the soul as a most excellent, glorious, and comprehensive good, as such a good that comprehends all good.[1] Christ is that one good that comprehends all good, that one thing that comprehends all things. All the beauties, all the rarities, all the excellencies, all the riches, all the glories of all created creatures, are comprehended in Christ. As the worth and value of many pieces of silver is connected in one piece of gold, or in one precious jewel, so all the whole volume of perfections which is spread through heaven and earth is epitomised in Christ; and the sight and sense of this makes the soul to triumph over the world. Faith presents more excellencies and better excellencies in Christ than can be lost for Christ, and so it makes the soul a conqueror.

I have been long upon these things, because they are of much weight and worth: I shall be the briefer in what follows. But before I leave this point, I shall give you these hints:

In the first place, I shall give you some hints concerning strong faith.

In the second place, I shall give you some hints concerning weak faith.

My design in both is, to keep precious souls from mistaking and fainting. Concerning strong faith, I shall give you these short hints:

(1.) *The first hint.* Strong faith will make a soul resolute in resisting, and happy in conquering the strongest temptations, Heb. xi. 3, &c., Dan. vi. 10, &c.

(2.) *The second hint.* It will make a man own God, and cleave to God, and hang upon God, in the face of the greatest difficulties and dangers, Rom. iv. 18, &c., Ps. xliv. 16–18. So Job will trust in God though he slay him, Job xiii. 15, 16.

(3.) *The third hint.* It will enable men to prefer Christ's cross before the world's crown, to prefer tortures before deliverance, Heb. xi. 3, &c.

(4.) *The fourth hint.* Strong faith will make a soul divinely fearless, and divinely careless; it will make a man live as the child lives in the family, without fear or care, Ps. xxiii. 4. Dan. iii. 16, 'We are not careful to answer thee, O king; our God whom we serve is able to deliver us, and he will deliver us,' &c. Micah vii. 7–9.

(5.) *The fifth hint.* Strong faith will make a man cleave to the promise when providence runs cross to the promise, Num. x. 29,

[1] *Omnis vita infidelium peccatum est, et nihil bonum sine summo bono.*—Augustine. There is no good without Christ, the chiefest good.

2 Chron. xx. 9–11. Ps. lx. 6, 7, 'God hath spoken in his holiness,' saith David; 'I will rejoice: I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth. Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine,' &c.[1] Though David was in his banishment, yet his faith accounts all his as if he had all in possession, and that because God had spoken in his holiness. His faith hangs upon the promise, though present providences did run cross to the promise, &c.

(6.) *The sixth hint.* Strong faith will make men comply with those commands that do most cross them in their most desirable comforts, Heb. xi. 8, 9, and x. 34; Gen. xxii.

Now, O precious souls! you are not to argue against your own souls, that surely you have no faith, because that your faith doth not lead you forth to such and such noble things. Thou mayest have true faith, though thou hast not so great faith as others of the Lord's worthies have had.[2]

The philosophers say that there are eight degrees of heat: we discern three. Now, if a man should define heat only by the highest degree, then all other degrees will be cast out from being heat. So if a man should define faith only by the highest degrees and operations of it, then that will be denied from being faith that indeed is faith, as I shall presently shew.

In the second place, I shall give you some hints concerning weak faith.

(1.) *The first hint.* A weak faith doth as much justify and as much unite a man to Christ as a strong faith. It gives a man as much propriety and interest in Christ as the strongest faith in the world. The babe hath as much interest in the father as he that is of grown years. A weak faith gives a man as good a title to Christ, and all the precious things of eternity, as the strongest faith in the world. A weak hand may receive a pearl as well as the strong hand of a giant.[3] Faith is a receiving of Christ, John i. 12.

(2.) *The second hint.* The promises of eternal happiness and blessedness are not made over to the strength of faith, but to the truth of faith; not to the degrees of faith, but to the reality of faith. He that believes shall be saved, though he hath not such a strength of faith as to stop the mouth of lions, as to work miracles, as to remove mountains, as to subdue kingdoms, as to quench the violence of fire, as to resist strong temptations, as to rejoice under great persecutions, Heb. xi. 33–35. No man that is saved is saved upon the account of the strength of his faith, but upon the account of the truth of his faith. In the great day Christ will not bring balances to weigh men's graces, but a touch-stone to try their graces; he will not look so much at the strength as at the truth of their graces.

(3.) *The third hint.* The weakest faith shall grow stronger and stronger. A weak believer shall go on from faith to faith. Christ is the finisher as well as the author of our faith, Rom. i. 17, Heb. xii. 2. Christ will nurse up this blessed babe, and will not suffer it to be

[1] So Joshua and Caleb, Num. xiv. 22–24.

[2] As it is dangerous to make false definitions of sin, so it is dangerous to make false definitions of grace.

[3] But a babe cannot improve his interest, as he that is of grown years, 2 Peter i. 1.

strangled in its infancy. He that hath begun a good work will perfect it, Philip. i. 6, 1 Peter i. 5. Christ is as well bound to look after our graces as he is to look after our souls. Grace is Christ's work, therefore it must prosper in his hand; he is the great builder and repairer of our graces; he will turn thy spark into a flame, thy drop into an ocean, thy penny into a pound, thy mite into a million, Mat. xii. 20, and xiii. 32. Therefore do not sit down discouraged because thy faith is weak. That which is sowed in weakness, shall rise in power. Thy weak faith shall have a glorious resurrection. Christ will not suffer such a pearl of price to be buried under a clod of earth.

(4.) *The fourth hint.* A little faith is faith, as a spark of fire is fire, a drop of water is water, a little star is a star, a little pearl is a pearl. Verily, thy little faith is a jewel that God doth highly prize and value; and thy little faith will make thee put a higher price upon Christ and grace than upon all the world, Mat. xviii. 10, 1 Peter ii. 7. Well! remember this, that the least measure of true faith will bring thee to salvation, and possess thee of salvation, as well as the greatest measure. A little faith accompanies salvation as well as a great faith, a weak faith as well as a strong. Therefore do not say, O precious soul, that thou hast not that faith that accompanies salvation, because thou hast not such a strong faith, or such and such degrees of faith. A great faith will yield a man a heaven here, a little faith will yield him a heaven hereafter.

The third thing that I am to shew you is, what repentance that is that accompanies salvation. That repentance doth accompany salvation I have formerly shewed. Now, I shall manifest in the following particulars what repentance that is that doth accompany salvation, that comprehends salvation, that borders upon salvation.

(1.) *The first property.* First, That repentance that accompanies salvation, *is a general, a universal change of the whole man; a change in every part, though it be but in part.* That repentance that accompanies salvation changes both heart and life, word and work; it makes an Ethiopian an Israelite, a leper an angel. 'Wash ye, make you clean;' there is the change of your hearts. 'Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well,' Isa. i. 16–18; there is the change of their practices.

So the prophet Ezekiel, 'Cast away all your transgressions,' saith he, 'whereby you have transgressed;' there is the change of life: 'And make you a new heart, and a new spirit,' Ezek. xviii. 30–32; there is the change of the heart.[1] That repentance that accompanies salvation works a change in the whole man; in all the qualities of the inward man, and in all the actions of the outward man. The understanding is turned from darkness to light; the will from a sinful servility to a holy liberty; the affections from disorder into order; the heart from hardness into softness. So in the outward man, the wanton eye is turned into an eye of chastity; the uncircumcised ear is turned into an obedient ear; the hands of bribery are turned into hands of liberality; and the

[1] True repentance is a thorough change both of the mind and manners. *Optima et optissima pœnitentia est nova vita*, saith Luther. It is said, that upon one's preaching, Repent, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, there followed almost everywhere, *Delictorum pœnitentia, morum reformatio, omnium contritio, cessabant blasphemiæ, aleæ ludi, &c.*

wandering feet of vanity are turned into ways of purity. And verily, that repentance that changes a man in some part, but not in every part, that only makes a man a Herod, or an Agrippa, a half Christian, an almost Christian, that repentance will never bring down heaven into a man's bosom here, nor never bring a man up to heaven hereafter. That repentance that accompanies salvation makes a man all glorious within, and his raiment to be of embroidered gold, Ps. xlv. 13; it stamps the image of God both upon the inward and the outward man; it makes the heart like the ark, all gold within; and it makes the life like the sun, all glorious without.

(2.) *The second property.* Secondly, That repentance that accompanies salvation is *a total turning as well as an universal turning;* a turning from all sin, without any reservation or exception. 'I hate and abhor every false way, but thy law do I love,' Ps. cxix. 163. So in Ezek. xviii. 30, 'Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.' So in Ezek. xxxiii. 11. As Noah's flood drowned his nearest and his dearest friends, so the flood of penitent tears drowns men's nearest and their dearest lusts. Be they Isaacs or Benjamins, be they right eyes or right hands, repentance that accompanies salvation puts all to the sword; it spares neither father nor mother, neither Agag nor Achan; it casts off all the rags of old Adam; it leaves not a horn nor a hoof behind; it throws down every stone of the old building; it scrapes off all leviathan's scales; it washeth away all leprous spots.[1] Ezek. xiv. 6, 'Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God, Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.' Sin is a turning the back upon God, and the face towards hell; but repentance is a turning the back upon sin, and a setting the face towards God. He that looks upon Jerusalem and upon Babylon with a leering eye at the same time; he that looks upon God, and at the same time looks upon any sin with a leering eye,[2] hath not yet reached unto this repentance that accompanies salvation; his repentance and profession cannot secure him from double damnation. He that serves God in some things, and his lusts in other things, says to God as David said to Mephibosheth concerning his lands, 'Thou and Ziba divide the lands,' 1 Sam. xix. 29; so thou and Satan divide my soul, my heart between you. Ah! doth not such a soul deserve a double hell? Christ takes every sin at a penitent man's hands, as Cæsar did his wounds from him of whom he merited better usage, with, *καὶ σὺ μοὺ τέκνον*, 'And thou, my son.' What, thou wound me! what, thou stab me! that shouldst venture thy own blood to save mine?[3]

There are no wounds that are so grievous and terrible to Christ, as those that he receives in the house of his friends, and this sets the penitent man's heart and hand against everything that makes against

[1] True hatred is *εἰς τὰ γενη*, to the whole kind.—*Aristotle.* And God has engaged himself to cleanse the hearts of his people from all, and to set their souls against all, Jer. xxxiii. 8; Ezek. xxxvi 25, 29, 33; 1 John i. 9. Repentance for sin is nothing worth without repentance from sin. [2] Thus did Herod and Judas, to their eternal ruin, James ii. 20.

[3] One stab at the heart kills, one hole in the ship sinks her, one act of treason makes a traitor; so one sin not forsaken, not turned from, will undo a soul for ever. Sin ever ends tragically, and this puts the penitent in battle array against every sin.

Christ. A true penitent looks upon every sin as poison, as the vomit of a dog, as the mire of the street, as the menstruous cloth, which of all things in the law was most unclean, defiling, and polluting. Pliny saith that the very trees, with touching of it, would become barren.[1] And his looking thus upon every sin, turns his heart against every sin, and makes him not only to refrain from sin, but to forsake it, and to loathe it more than hell.

(3.) *The third property.* Thirdly, That repentance that accompanies salvation is not only a turning from all sin, but *it is also a turning unto God.*[2] It is not only a ceasing from doing evil, but it is also a learning to do well; it is not only a turning from darkness, but it is also a turning to light; as the apostle speaks, Acts xxvi. 18, 'To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.' So in Isa. lv. 7, 'Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord,' &c. It is not enough for the man of iniquity to forsake his evil way, but he must also return unto the Lord; he must subject his heart to the power of divine grace, and his life to the will and word of God. As negative goodness can never satisfy a gracious soul, so negative goodness can never save a sinful soul. It is not enough that thou art thus and thus bad, but thou must be thus and thus good, or thou art undone for ever: Ezek. xviii. 21, 'But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.' Negative righteousness and holiness is no righteousness, no holiness, in the account of God. It was not the pharisee's negative righteousness, nor his comparative goodness, that could prevent his being rejected of God, his being shut out of heaven, his burning in hell, Luke xviii. 5, Mat. xx. 13, 14. It is not enough that the tree bears no ill fruit, but it must bring forth good fruit, else it must be cut down and cast into the fire. That tree that is not for fruit is for the fire. 'Every tree that brings not forth good fruit,' says Christ, 'is hewn down, and cast into the fire,' Mat. vii. 19. Men that content themselves with negative righteousness, shall find at last heaven-gates bolted upon them with a double bolt. All that negative righteousness and holiness can do, is to help a man to one of the best chambers and easiest beds in hell. That repentance that accompanies salvation brings the heart and life not only off from sin, but on to God; it makes a man not only cease from walking in the ways of death, but it makes him walk in the ways of life: 'They do no iniquity, they walk in his ways,' Ps. cxix. 3.[3]

(4.) *The fourth property.* Fourthly, That repentance that accompanies salvation, *strikes most effectually and particularly against that sin or sins, that the sinner was most apt and prone to before his conversion.* The hand of repentance is most against that sin, it is most

[1] Isa. xxx. 22. *Nihil in lege menstruosâ immundius.*—Jerome. [Pliny, Nat. Hist., lib. xxviii. cap. 23.—G.]

[2] The Hebrew word for repentance is from שוּב, *shob*, which signifies to return, implying a going back from what a man had done. It notes a returning or converting from one thing to another, as from sin to God, from evil to good, from hell to heaven.

[3] He that holds not wholly with Christ, doth very shamefully neglect Christ, *Aut totum mecum tene, aut totum omitte.*—Gregory Nazianzen. And therefore if Christ trample upon them at last, it is just.

upon that sin that the soul hath looked most with a leering eye upon.[1] The chief and principal sins that Israel was guilty of, was idolatry and sinful compliance. Now, when God works kindly upon them, they put the hand of repentance upon those particular sins, as you may see: Isa. xxvii. 9, 'By this, therefore, shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin: when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalk stones, that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up.'[2] Here you see, when God appears and acts graciously for and towards his people, they put the hand of repentance upon their groves and images; these must down, these must no longer stand. The groves and the images shall not stand up, they shall be utterly abandoned and destroyed, demolished, and abolished. So in Isa. xxx. 22, 'Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.' Here you see the hand of repentance is against their idols of silver and gold; and not only against their idols, but also against whatsoever had any relation to them. Now they shew nothing but a detestation of their idols, and a holy indignation against them: 'Get you hence.'[3] The hand of repentance makes a divorce between them and their idols, between their souls and their especial sins. Now they are as much in hating, abhorring, abominating, and contemning their idols and images, as they were formerly in adoring, worshipping, and honouring of them. So Mary Magdalene, Luke vii., walks quite cross and contrary to her former self, her sinful self, she crosses the flesh in those very things wherein formerly she did gratify the flesh. So the penitent jailor, Acts xvi., washes those very wounds that his own bloody hands had made. He acts in ways of mercy, quite contrary to his former cruelty. At first there was none so fierce, so furious, so cruel, so bloody, so inhuman in his carriage to the apostles; at last, none so gentle, so soft, so sweet, so courteous, so affectionate to them. The same you may see in Zaccheus, Luke xix. 8, &c. In Paul, Acts ix., and in Manasseh, in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 6.

(5.) *The fifth property.* Fifthly, That repentance that accompanies salvation, *is very large and comprehensive.* It comprehends and takes in these following particulars, besides those already named.

[1.] *It takes in a sight and sense of sin.* Men must first see their sins, they must be sensible of their sins, before they can repent of their sins. Ephraim had first a sight of his sin, and then he repents and turns from his sin. 'After I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh,' Jer. xxxi. 18, 19. A man first sees himself out of the way, before he returns into the way. Till he sees that he is out of the way, he walks still on, but when he perceives that he is out of the way, then he begins to make inquiry after the right way. So when the sinner comes to

[1] Augustine, a great sinner, wrote twelve books of repentance, and walked most cross to the particular sins he had most lived in.

[2] This was the great sin of Israel, but after their return out of captivity, they never set up idols more, but were wonderful zealous to keep their temple from such defilements, both in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, and of the Romans, and do account them as a menstruous cloth, to this very day.

[3] The Jews were willing in the Romans' time, rather [to] die than to suffer the eagle, the imperial arms, to be set upon the temple.

see his way to be a way of death, then he cries out, 'Oh lead me in the way of life, lead me in the way everlasting,' Ps. cxxxix. 24.[1]

[2.] For I shall but touch upon these things. That repentance that accompanies salvation, doth include not only a sight and sense of sin, but also *confession and acknowledgment of sin.*[2] Ps. li., and Ps. xxxii. 3–5, 'While I kept close my sin, my bones consumed; but I said, I will confess my sin, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin;' Job xxxiii. 21–27. The promise of remission is made to confession. 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.' So Prov. xxviii. 13, 'He that hideth his sin, shall not prosper, but he that confesseth and forsaketh it, shall find mercy.' If we confess our sins sincerely, seriously, humbly, cordially, pardon attends us. *Homo agnoscit, deus ignoscit.* Confession of sin must be joined with confusion of sin, or all is lost, God is lost, Christ is lost, heaven lost, and the soul lost for ever.[3]

The true penitent can say, with Vivaldus, 'I hide not my sins, but I shew them; I wipe them not away, but I sprinkle them; I do not excuse them, but I accuse them.' *Peccata enim non nocent, si non placent,* 'My sins hurt me not, if I like them not;' the beginning of my salvation is the knowledge of my transgression.

[3.] That repentance that accompanies salvation doth include, not only confession of sin, but also *contrition for sin;* Ps. li. 4, 1 Sam. vii. 2, Zech. xii. 10, 11, Ezra x. 1, 2, 2 Cor. vii. 11, &c.[4] It breaks the heart with sighs, sobs, and groans, for that a loving Father is offended, a blessed Saviour crucified, and the sweet Comforter grieved. Penitent Mary Magdalene weeps much, as well as loves much. Tears, instead of gems, were the ornaments of penitent David's bed; and surely that sweet singer never sung more melodiously than when his heart was broken most penitentially. How shall God wipe away my tears in heaven, if I shed none on earth? And how shall I reap in joy, if I sow not in tears? I was born with tears, and shall die with tears; why should I then live without them in this valley of tears? saith the true penitent. The sweetest joys are from the sourest tears; penitent tears are the breeders of spiritual joy. When Hannah had wept, she went away and was no more sad, 1 Sam. i. 18. The bee gathers the best honey off the bitterest herbs. Christ made the best wine of water; the strongest, the purest, the truest, the most permanent, and the most excellent joy is made of the waters of repentance. If God be God, 'they that sow in tears shall reap in joy,'[5] Ps. cxxvi. 5.

But that no mourner may drown himself in his own tears, let me give

[1] It was so with Paul, who thought himself in as good a way for heaven as any; Acts ix. and xxvi. compared.

[2] Acts xix. 18. *Confessio peccati est vomitus sordium animæ.*—Augustine.

[3] *Non dico ut confitearis conservo tuo peccata tua, dicito Deo, qui curet ea.*—Chrysostom, in Ps. l.

[4] Jer. xiii. 17; Joel ii. 13. David cries, not *Perii,* but *Peccavi;* not, I am undone, but I have done foolishly. Basil wept when he saw the rose, because it brought to his mind the first sin, from whence it had the prickles, which it had not while man continued in innocence, as he thought. You know how to apply it.

[5] True repentance is a sorrowing for sin as it is *offensivum Dei, aversivum à Deo.* Peter's was for sin, Judas his for punishment. Peter grieves because Christ was grieved, Judas grieved because he should be damned, Ps. xlii. 5.

this caution, viz. that there is nothing beyond remedy but the tears of the damned. A man who may persist in the way to paradise, should not place himself in the condition of a little hell; and he that may or can hope for that great all, ought not to be dejected nor overwhelmed for anything.

[4.] That repentance that accompanies salvation doth include not only contrition for sin, but also *a holy shame and blushing for sin:* Ezra ix. 6, Jer. iii. 24, 25, xxxi. 19; Ezek. xvi. 61, 63, 'And thou shalt be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.' When the penitent soul sees his sins pardoned, the anger of God pacified, and divine justice satisfied, then he sits down ashamed: so Rom. vi. 21, 'What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?' Sin and shame are inseparable companions. A man cannot have the seeming sweet of sin but he shall have the real shame that accompanies sin. These two God hath joined together, and all the world cannot put them asunder.[1]

It was an impenitent Caligula that said of himself 'that he loved nothing better in himself than that he could not be ashamed.'

Justinus's motto was, *Quod pudet hoc pigeat,* That should grieve most which is shameful in itself, and done against conscience.

And doubtless those things are only shameful that are sinful. A soul that hath sinned away all shame is a soul ripe for hell, and given up to Satan. A greater plague cannot befall a man in this life than to sin and not to blush.

[5.] That repentance that accompanies salvation, comprehends *loathing and abhorring of sin, and of ourselves for sin, as well as shame and blushing for sin,* Job xlii. 6; Ezek. xvi. 61, 62, 63; Amos v. 15; Ezek. xx. 41, 42, 43, 'And ye shall remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for all the evils that you have committed.' The sincere penitent loathes his sins, and he loathes himself also because of his sins. He cries out, Oh these wanton eyes! oh these wicked hands! oh this deceitful tongue! oh this crooked will! oh this corrupt heart! oh how do I loathe my sins, how do I loathe myself, how do I loathe sinful self, and how do I loathe my natural self, because of sinful self! My sins are a burden to me, and they make me a burden to myself; my sins are an abhorring to me, and they make me abhor myself in dust and ashes. A true penitent hath not only low thoughts of himself, but loathsome thoughts of himself.[2] None can think or speak so vilely of him, as he doth and will think and speak of himself. Ezek. vi. 9, 'And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart' (as the heart of a husband is at the adulterous carriage of his wife), 'which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a-whoring after their idols: and they shall loathe themselves for evils which they have

[1] בוש, *bosh,* to blush, to be abashed, to wax pale and wan, &c. *Quantum displicet Deo immunditia peccati, in tantum placet Deo erubescentia pœnitentis.*—Bernard. So much the more God hath been displeased with the blackness of sin, the more will he be well pleased with the blushing of the sinner.

[2] *Vis magnus esse? incipe ab imo,* wilt thou be great? begin from below, saith one. It is very observable that those brave creatures, the eagle and the lion, were not offered in sacrifice unto God, but the poor lamb and dove; to note that God regards not your brave, high, lofty spirits, but poor, meek, and contemptible spirits.

committed in all their abominations.' If thy repentance do not work thee out with thy sins, and thy sins work thee out of love with thyself, thy repentance is not that repentance that accompanies salvation.[1] And thus you see the particular things that that repentance that doth accompany salvation doth comprehend and include.

(6.) *The sixth property.* Sixthly, That repentance that accompanies salvation, hath these choice companions attending of it.

[1.] *Faith.* Zech. xii. 10, 11, 'They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn,' &c. Mourning and believing go together. So in Mat. iv. 17; Mark i. 14, 15, 'Now, after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.'

[2.] *Love to Christ* doth always accompany that repentance that accompanies salvation, as you may see in Mary Magdalene, Luke vii.

[3.] *A filial fear of offending God, and a holy care to honour God,* doth always accompany that repentance that accompanies salvation: 2 Cor. vii. 10, 'For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: for, behold, this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.' Verily, repentance to life hath all these lively companions attending of it; they are born together and will live together, till the penitent soul changes earth for heaven, grace for glory.[2]

(7.) *The seventh property.* Seventhly and lastly, That repentance that accompanies salvation is *a continued act, a repentance never to be repented of,* 2 Cor. vii. 10. Repentance is a continual spring, where the waters of godly sorrow are always flowing. A sound penitent is still a-turning nearer and nearer to God; he is still a-turning further and further from sin. This makes the penitent soul to sigh and mourn that he can get no nearer to God, that he can get no further from sin, Rom. vii. The work of repentance is not the work of an hour, a day, a year, but the work of this life. A sincere penitent makes as much conscience of repenting daily as he doth of believing daily; and he can as easily content himself with one act of faith, or love, or joy, as he can content himself with one act of repentance: 'My sins are ever before me,' says David, Ps. li. 3. Next to my being kept from sin, I count it the greatest mercy in the world to be still a-mourning over sin, says the penitent soul. The penitent soul never ceases repenting till he ceases living.[3] He goes to heaven with the joyful tears of repentance in his eyes. He knows that his whole life is but a day of sowing tears that he may at last reap everlasting joys. That repentance that accompanies salvation is a final forsaking of sin. It is a bidding sin an everlasting adieu; it is a taking an eternal farewell of sin; a never

[1] Some people can shed tears for nothing, some for anything; but a sound penitent sheds more tears for his sins than he doth for his sufferings.

[2] Repentance is *Post naufragium tabula,* the fair daughter of a foul mother. Repentance is a fruitful womb.

[3] *Quid restat, O peccator, nisi ut in tota vita tua deplores totam vitam tuam.*—Anselmus. Oh, then, what then remains but in our whole life to lament the sins of our whole life? ['*Cur Deus Homo.*'—G.]

turning to folly more: 'What have I to do any more with idols?' says Ephraim, Hosea xiv. 8. I have tasted of the bitterness that is in sin; I have tasted of the sweetness of divine mercy in pardoning of sin; therefore, away, sin; I will never have to do with you more! You have robbed Christ of his service, and me of my comfort and crown. Away, away, sin! you shall never be courted nor countenanced by me more. That man that only puts off his sins in the day of adversity, as he doth his garments at night when he goes to bed, with an intent to put them on again in the morning of prosperity, never yet truly repented: he is a dog that returneth to the vomit again; he is a swine that returns to the wallowing in the mire. Such a dog was Judas; such a swine was Demas.

It is an extraordinary vanity in some men to lay aside their sins before solemn duties, but with a purpose to return to them again, as the serpent layeth aside his poison when he goeth to drink, and when he hath drunk, he returns to it again, as they fable it. It is sad when men say to their lusts, as Abraham said to his servants, 'Abide you here, and I will go and worship, and return again to you,' Gen. xxii. 5. Verily such souls are far off from that repentance that accompanies salvation, for that makes a final and everlasting separation between sin and the soul. It makes such a divorce between sin and the soul, and puts them so far asunder, that all the world can never bring them to meet as two lovers together. The penitent soul looks upon sin and deals with sin, not as a friend, but as an enemy. It deals with sin as Amnon dealt with Tamar: 2 Sam. xiii. 15, 'And Amnon hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, begone.' Just thus doth the penitent soul carry itself towards sin.

And thus you see what repentance that is that accompanies salvation.

The fourth thing I am to shew is, what obedience that is that doth accompany salvation. That obedience doth accompany salvation, I have formerly proved. Now what this obedience is that doth accompany or comprehend salvation, I shall shew you in these following particulars:

[1.] *The first property.* First, That obedience that accompanies salvation is *cordial and hearty.* The heart, the inward man, doth answer and echo to the word and will of God. The believer knows that no obedience but hearty obedience is acceptable to Christ. He knows that nothing takes Christ's heart but what comes from the heart. Christ was hearty in his obedience for me, says the believer; and shall not I be hearty in my obedience to him? Christ will lay his hand of love, his hand of acceptance, upon no obedience but what flows from the heart: Rom. vi. 17, 'Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.' So in Rom. vii. 25, 'So then with the mind, I myself serve the law of God.' My heart, says Paul, is in my obedience. So in Rom. i. 9, 'God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son.' Many serve God with their bodies, but I serve him with my spirit; many serve him with the outward man, but I serve him with my inward man,[1] Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. God hath

[1] Isa. xxix. 13; Mat. xv. 7–9. The heart is *Camera omnipotentis Regis, i.e.* the presence-chamber of the King of heaven, and that upon which his eye, his hand, his heart, is most set.

written his law in believers' hearts, and therefore they cannot but obey it from the heart: 'I delight to do thy will, O my God.' How so? Why, 'thy law is within my heart,' or, in the midst of my bowels, as the Hebrew hath it, בתוך מעי, Ps. xl. 8. The heart within echoes and answers to the commandments without, as a book written answers to his mind that writes it; as face answers to face; as the impression on the wax answers to the character engraven on the seal. The scribes and Pharisees were much in the outward obedience of the law, but their hearts were not in their obedience; and therefore all they did signified nothing in the account of Christ, who is only taken with outward actions as they flow from the heart and affections. Their souls were not in their services, and therefore all their services were lost services. They were very glorious in their outward profession, but their hearts were as filthy sepulchres. Their outsides shined as the sun, but their insides were as black as hell, Mat. xxiii. They were like the Egyptians' temples, beautiful without, but filthy within. Well! remember this: No action, no service, goes for current in heaven, but that which is sealed up with integrity of heart. God will not be put off with the shell, when we give the devil the kernel.

(2.) *The second property.* Secondly, That obedience that accompanies salvation is *universal as well as cordial.* The soul falls in with every part and point of God's will, so far as he knows it, without prejudice or partiality, without tilting the balance on one side or another. A soul sincerely obedient, will not pick and choose what commands to obey and what to reject, as hypocrites do; he hath an eye to see, an ear to hear, and a heart to obey the first table as well as the second, and the second table as well as the first; he doth not adhere to the first and neglect the second, as hypocrites do; neither doth he adhere to the second and contemn the first, as profane men do; he obeys not out of humour but out of duty, he obeys not out of choice but out of conscience: Ps. cxix. 6, 'Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto *all* thy commandments.' Look, as faith never singles out his object, but lays hold on every object God holds forth for it to close with, faith doth not choose this truth and reject that, it doth not close with one and reject another.[1] Faith doth not say, I will trust God in this case but not in that, I will trust him for this mercy but not for that mercy, I will trust him in this way but not in that way. Faith doth not choose its object. Faith knows that he is powerful and faithful that hath promised, and therefore faith closes with one object as well as another. So a true obedient soul singles not out the commands of God, as to obey one and rebel against another; it dares not, it cannot say, I will serve God in this command but not in that. No; in an evangelical sense it obeys all: Luke i. 5, 6, 'Zacharias and Elizabeth were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.'[2] They walked not only in com-

[1] *Non eligit mandata*, he doth not pick and choose. He obeys all, in respect of his sincere purpose, desire, and endeavour; and this God accepts in Christ for perfect and complete obedience, &c.

[2] Ἀμέμπτως, without complaint. An obedient soul is like a crystal glass with a light in the midst, which shines forth through every part thereof. So that royal law that is written upon his heart shines forth into every parcel of his life; his outward works do echo to a law within.

mandments, but also in ordinances; not only in ordinances, but also in commandments. They were good souls, and good at both. A man sincerely obedient lays such a charge upon his whole man, as Mary, the mother of Christ, did upon all the servants at the feast: John ii. 5, 'Whatever the Lord saith unto you do it.' Eyes, ears, hands, heart, lips, legs, body, and soul, do you all seriously and affectionately observe whatever Jesus Christ says unto you, and do it. So David doth: Ps. cxix. 34, 69, 'Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.' 'The proud have forged a lie against me; but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart.' The whole heart includes all the faculties of the soul and all the members of the body. Says David, I will put hand and heart, body and soul, all within me and all without me, to the keeping and observing of thy precepts. Here is a soul thorough-paced in his obedience, he stands not halting nor halving of it, he knows the Lord loves to be served truly and totally, and therefore he obeys with an entire heart and a sincere spirit.

I have read of a very strange speech that dropped out of the mouth of Epictetus, a heathen: 'If it be thy will,' says he, 'O Lord, command me what thou wilt, send me whither thou wilt, I will not withdraw myself from anything that seems good to thee.'[1] Ah! how will this heathen at last rise in judgment against all Sauls, Jehus, Judases, Demases, scribes, pharisees, temporaries,[2] who are partial in their obedience, who while they yield obedience to some commands, live in the habitual breach of other commands! Verily, he that lives in the habitual breach of one command, shall at last be reputed by God guilty of the breach of every command, James ii. 10, and God accordingly will in a way of justice proceed against him, Ezek. xviii. 10–13. It was the glory of Caleb and Joshua, that they followed the Lord fully in one thing, as well as another, Num. xiv. 24. So Cornelius: 'We are present before God, to hear whatsoever shall be commanded us of God,' Acts x. 33. He doth not pick and choose. So in Acts xiii. 22, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will;' or rather as it is in the Greek, 'he shall fulfil all my wills.'[3] to note the universality and sincerity of his obedience. A sincere heart loves all commands of God, and prizes all commands of God, and sees a divine image stamped upon all the commands of God; and therefore the main bent and disposition of his soul, is to obey all, to subject to all. God commands universal obedience, Joshua i. 8; Deut. v. 29; Ezek. xviii. The promise of reward is made over to universal obedience, Ps. xix. 11, Josh. i. 8. Universal obedience is a jewel that all will wish for or rejoice in, at the day of death and the day of account; and the remembrance of these things, with others of the like nature, provokes all upright souls to be impartial, to be universal in their obedience.

[3.] *The third property.* Thirdly, That obedience that accompanies salvation *springs from inward spiritual causes, and from holy and heavenly motives.* It flows from faith. Hence it is called 'the obedi-

[1] Arrian. Ep. ad, L. Gall. i. p. 4; *Dissert.* i. 12, 27; ii. 17, 22, &c.—G.

[2] '*Temporary* meddler,' Measure for Measure, v. 1.—G.

[3] θελήματα, wills. He minds not only general duties of religion, but also particular duties; as a magistrate, as a minister, as a father, as a master, as a son, as a servant.

ence of faith,' Rom. xvi. 26. So in 1 Tim. i. 5, 'Now the end of the commandment is love, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.' Faith draws down that divine virtue and power into the soul that makes it lively and active, abundant and constant, in the work and way of the Lord. And as faith, so love, puts the soul forward in ways of obedience. John xiv. 21, 23, 'If any man love me, he will keep my commandments.' So Ps. cxix. 48, 'My hands also will I lift up to thy commandments, which I have loved.' Divine love is said to be the keeping the commandments, because it puts the soul upon keeping them. Divine love makes every weight light, every yoke easy, every command joyous. It knows no difficulties, it facilitates obedience, it divinely constrains the soul to obey, to walk, to run the ways of God's commands.[1] And as sound obedience springs from faith and love, so it flows from a filial fear of God: Ps. cxix. 161, 'Mine heart stands in awe of thy word.' So Heb. xi. 7, 'Noah, being warned of God touching things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark.'

Ah! but hypocrites and temporaries are not carried forth in their obedience from such precious and glorious principles, and therefore it is that God casts all their services as dung in their faces, Isa. i. 11. And as that obedience which accompanies salvation flows from inward spiritual principles, so it flows from holy and heavenly motives, as from the tastes of divine love, and the sweetness and excellency of communion with God, and the choice and precious discoveries that the soul in ways of obedience hath had of the beauty and glory of God, Isa. lxiv. 5. The sweet looks, the heavenly words, the glorious kisses, the holy embraces that the obedient soul hath had, makes it freely and fully obedient to the word and will of God. Ah! but all the motives that move hypocrites and carnal professors to obedience are only external and carnal, as the eye of the creature, the ear of the creature, the applause of the creature, the rewards of the creature; either the love of the loaves, or the gain of custom, or the desire of ambition, Hosea vii. 14. Sometimes they are moved to obedience from the fear of the creature, and sometimes from the want of the creature, and sometimes from the example of the creature, and sometimes from vows made to the creature. Sometimes the frowns of God, the displeasure of God, the rod of God, moves them to obedience, Hosea v. 15, Ps. lxxviii. 34. Sometimes the quieting and stilling of conscience, the stopping of the mouth of conscience, and the disarming of conscience of all her whipping, racking, wounding, condemning, terrifying, and torturing power, puts them upon some ways of obedience. Their obedience always flows from some low, base, carnal, corrupt consideration or other. Oh! but that obedience that accompanies salvation doth always flow, as you see, from inward and spiritual causes, and from holy and heavenly motives.

[4.] *The fourth property.* Fourthly, That obedience that accompanies salvation is *a ready, free, willing, and cheerful obedience.*

(1.) *It is ready obedience.* Ps. xxvii. 8, 'When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek;' Ps. cxix. 60, 'I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments;'

[1] Where love is, the soul says of every command, *Bonus sermo*, it is a good saying; but where love is wanting, the man cries out, *Durus sermo*, 'it is a hard saying; who can bear it?'

Ps. xviii. 44, 'As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me; the strangers shall submit themselves unto me.'

I have read of one who readily fetched water near two miles every day for a whole year together to pour upon a dry stick, upon the bare command of a superior, when no reason could be given for the thing.[1] Oh how ready, then, doth grace make the soul to obey those divine commands that are backed with the highest, strongest, and choicest arguments.

(2.) As that obedience that accompanies salvation is ready obedience, so it is *free and willing obedience.*[2] Acts xxi. 13, 'Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart? for I am willing not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.' The beamings out of divine love and glory make gracious souls 'willing in the day of his power,' Ps. cx. 3. Those divine principles that be in them make them willingly obey, without co-action or compulsion. So 2 Cor. viii. 3. The Macedonians were willingly obedient, or, as the Greek hath it, *ἀυθαίρετοι*, they were volunteers not only to their power, but beyond their power. All the motions and actings of Christ towards his people, for his people, and in his people, are free; he loves them freely, he pardons them freely, he intercedes for them freely, he acts them freely, and he saves them freely, and so they move and act towards Christ freely; they hear, they pray, they wait, they weep, they work, they watch freely and willingly. That Spirit of grace and holiness that is in them makes them volunteers in all religious duties and services.[3]

It is reported of Socrates, that when the tyrant threatened death unto him, he answered, 'He was willing;' nay then, says the tyrant, you shall live against your will. He answered again, Nay, whatsoever you do with me, it shall be my will. Yet if nature, a little raised and refined, will enable a man to do this, will not grace, will not union and communion with Christ, enable a man to do as much, yea, infinitely more?[4]

(3.) As that obedience that accompanies salvation is free and willing obedience, so it is *cheerful and delightful obedience.* It is a believer's meat and drink, it is his joy and crown, it is a pleasure, a paradise to his soul, to be still obeying his Father's will, to be still found about his Father's business: Ps. xl. 8, 'I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is in my heart.' As the sun rejoiceth to run his race, so do the saints rejoice to run the race of obedience. God's work is wages, yea, it is better than wages; therefore they cannot but delight in it. Not only *for* keeping, but also *in* keeping of his commands, there is great reward: Ps. cxii. 1, 'Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments:' that is, in the studying and obeying of his commandments. Ps. cxix. 16, 'I will delight myself in thy statutes; I will not forget thy word.' Ver. 35, 'Make me to go in the path of thy commandments, for therein do I delight.' Ver. 47, 'And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.' Ver. 143, 'Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me, yet thy com-

[1] Cassianus, lib. iv. c. 24.

[2] *Voluntas semiplena est voluntas*, an half will, an incomplete will, an unwilling will, is a will in divine account.

[3] 1 Chron. xxix. 6–18; 1 Tim. vi. 18; 1 Thes. ii. 8.

[4] A saint at worst is obedient, either *voluntate plena* or *semiplena*, with a [willing] will or an unwilling will; like the merchant that is unwillingly willing to throw his goods overboard into the tempestuous sea to save his life.

mandments are my delight.' Divine commands are not grievous to a lover of Christ; for *nihil difficile amanti*, nothing is difficult to him that loveth. The love of Christ, the discoveries of Christ, the embraces of Christ, make a gracious soul studious and industrious to keep the commandments of Christ, in lip and life, in word and work, in head and heart, in book and breast.[1]

Thus you see that that obedience that accompanies salvation is ready, free, and cheerful obedience.

[5.] *The fifth property.* Fifthly, The obedience that accompanies salvation, is *peremptory obedience.*[2] Josh. xxiv. 15, 'I and my household will serve the Lord.' He is fully resolved upon it, come what come can; in the face of all dangers, difficulties, impediments and discouragements, he will obey the Lord, he will follow the Lord. So those worthies, Heb. xi. 'of whom the world was not worthy,' obeyed divine commands peremptorily, resolvedly, in the face of all manner of deaths and miseries. So Paul was 'obedient to the heavenly vision,' though bonds did attend him in every place, Acts xx. 23. He is better at obeying than at disputing; 'I conferred not, says he, with flesh and blood,' Gal. i. 15, 16. So Peter and John, and the rest of the apostles, in despite of all threatenings and beatings, they obey the Lord, they keep fast and close to their Master's work.[3] 'Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken more unto you than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word. And when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.' Acts. iv. 19, 20, 29, and v. 40–42, compared.

Thus you see, no trials, no troubles, no terrors, no threats, no dangers, no deaths, could deter them from peremptory obedience to divine precepts. It is not the fiery furnace, nor the lions' den, nor the bloody sword, nor the torturing rack, that can fright gracious souls from their obedience to their dearest Lord: Ps. cxix. 106, 'I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.'

[6.] *The sixth property.* Sixthly, The end of that obedience that accompanies salvation is, *divine glory.*[4] The eye of the obedient soul, in prayer and praises, in talking and walking, in giving and receiving, in living and doing, is divine glory: Rom. xiv. 7, 8, 'For none of us liveth to

[1] Ps. xix. 5, 11, compared. *Tanto magis delectat opus bonum, quanto magis diligitur Deus summum et incommutabile bonum.*—Augustine. A good work so much the more delighteth, by how much the more God, the chiefest and unchangeable good, is loved. *In hoc cognoscitur amor Christi, si quis servat præcepta Christi.*—Bernard.

[2] Josephus reports of such resolute Christians, that in the face of all reproaches and difficulties, followed Christ to the cross.

[3] You may as well stop the sun from running his race, as you are able to hinder gracious souls from obeying divine commands, Ps. xliv. 13, 14. As a wicked nature makes the wicked peremptory in their disobedience (Jer. xliv. 15–17), so the divine nature makes gracious souls peremptory in their obedience.

[4] *Propter te Domine, propter te*, is every godly man's motto. *Quicquid agas, propter Deum agas*, was an Eastern apophthegm.—[John] Drusius.

himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.' In all actions, the obedient soul intends and attends most divine glory. If Satan, the world, or the old man do at any time propound other ends to the soul, this great end, divine glory, works out all those ends; for this is most certain, that which a man makes his greatest and his highest end, will work out all other ends.[1] Look, as the light of the sun doth extinguish and put out the light of the fire, so when a man makes the glory of God his end, that end will extinguish and put out all carnal, low, base ends; that man that makes himself the end of his actions, that makes honour, riches, applause, &c. the end of his actions, he must at last lie down in eternal sorrow, he must dwell in everlasting burnings. The man is as his end is, and his work is as his end is; if that be naught, all is naught; if that be good, all is good, and the man is happy for ever, Isa. xxx. 33, and xxxiii. 14.

[7.] *The seventh property.* Seventhly, that obedience that accompanies salvation, that borders upon salvation, that comprehends salvation, is *a constant obedience.*[2] Ps. cxix. 112, 'I have inclined my heart to do thy statutes alway, even to the end.' The causes, springs, and motives of holy obedience are lasting and permanent, and therefore the obedience of a sound Christian is not like the morning dew, or a deceitful bow: Ps. xliv. 17–19, 'All this comes upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy ways; though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.' The love of Christ, the promises of Christ, the presence of Christ, the discoveries of Christ, the example of Christ, and the recompence of reward held forth by Christ, makes a sound Christian hold on, and hold out, in ways of obedience, in the face of all dangers and deaths. Neither the hope of life, nor the fear of death, can make a sincere Christian either change his master or decline his work:[3] Philip. ii. 12, 'Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.' This was the Philippians' glory, that they were constant in their obedience; whether Paul was present or absent, they constantly minded their work.

Ah! but hypocrites and temporaries are but passionate, transient, and inconstant in their obedience;[4] they talk of obedience, they commend obedience, and now and then in a fit they step in the way of obedience, but they do not walk in a way of obedience, they are only constant in inconstancy: Job xxvii. 10, 'Will the hypocrite delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?' Or, as the Hebrew hath it, בכל־עת, will he in every time call upon God? Will he call upon God in

[1] *Finis movet ad agendum*, the end moves to doing.

[2] *Si dixisti, Sufficit, periisti*, if once thou sayest it is enough, thou art undone.—*Augustine.*

[3] History reports, that it hath been the ancient custom of pious Christians under persecuting emperors, to meet, and by the sacrament to bind themselves for ever to fly what was evil, and follow what was good, whatever it cost them.

[4] Such hypocrites may well cry out as Ecebolius did, who was only constant in inconstancy, πατησατε με το ἀναισθητον, tread upon me that am unsavoury salt. [Suidas, *sub voce;* Socrates, H. E., iii. 13.—G.]

time of prosperity and in time of adversity? in time of health and in time of sickness? in time of strength and in time of weakness? in time of honour and in time of disgrace? in time of liberty and in time of durance? &c. The answer to be given in is, he will not always, he will not in every time call upon God. As a lame horse, when he is heated, will go well enough, but when he cools, he halts downright; even so an hypocrite, though for a time he may go on fairly in a religious way, yet when he hath attained his ends, he will halt downright, and be able to go no further.

The abbot in Melancthon lived strictly, and walked demurely, and looked humbly, so long as he was but a monk; but when, by his seeming extraordinary sanctity, he got to be made abbot, he grew intolerably proud and insolent, and being asked the reason of it, confessed that his former carriage and lowly looks was but to see if he could find the keys of the abbey.[1] Ah! many unsound hearts there be, that will put on the cloak of religion, and speak like angels, and look like saints, to find the keys of preferment, and when they have found them, none prove more proud, base, and vain than they. Ah! but that obedience that accompanies salvation is constant and durable. A Christian in his course goes straight on heavenwards. 'The two milch-kine,' 1 Sam. vi. 12, 'took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.'[2] So gracious souls goes straight[3] along the highway to heaven, which is the way of obedience; though they go lowing and weeping, yet they still go on, and turn not aside to the right hand nor to the left. If by the violence of temptation or corruption they are thrust out of the way at any time, they quickly return into it again. They may sometimes step out of the way of obedience, but they cannot walk out of the way of obedience. The honest traveller may step out of his way, but he soon returns into it again, and so doth the honest soul, Ps. cxix. 3, 4.

(8.) *The eighth property.* Eighthly, and lastly, *Passive obedience accompanies salvation as well as active.* 'Every one that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution,' 2 Tim. iii. 12, ii. 12, from tongue or pen, from hand or heart. 'If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him,' Rom. viii. 17, 18. There is no passing into paradise but under the flaming sword. 'Through many afflictions we must enter into the kingdom of heaven,' Acts xiv. 22. A sincere heart is [as] willing to obey Christ passively as actively: Acts xxi. 13, 'I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus.' I am willing, says Paul, to lose my comforts for Christ, I am ready to endure any dolors for Christ, I am willing to lose the creature, and to leave the creature for Christ.[4] Paul, Philip. iii. 8, speaks of himself as having been like one in a sea-tempest, that had cast out all

[1] The monk in the fable, being a poor fisherman's son, still spread a net over his table, as a remembrance of his mean original, till he had by these shows of humility attained to the highest preferments, which when he had attained, he laid away the net, because the fish was caught.

[2] A Christian's emblem should be an house moving towards heaven, saith Clement. [See Vol. I., page 80.—G.]

[3] *Sic;* and this is a frequent construction with Brooks and his most scholarly contemporaries.—G.

[4] I might produce a cloud of witnesses that have been excellent at suffering, at burning.

his precious wares and goods for Christ's sake; 'for whom,' says he, 'I have suffered the loss of all.' So must we, in stormy times, cast all overboard for Christ, and swim to an immortal crown, through sorrows, blood, and death. But because I have in this treatise spoke at large of the sufferings of the saints, I shall say no more of it in this place; and thus you see what that obedience is that accompanies salvation.

The fifth thing that I am to shew you is, what love that is that accompanies salvation.

That love doth accompany salvation I have formerly shewed you; but now I shall shew you what that love is that doth accompany salvation; and that I shall do in these following particulars. I shall not speak of the firstness, freeness, fulness, sweetness, and greatness of Christ's love to us, but of that love of ours that accompanies salvation, concerning which I shall say thus:

(1.) *The first property.* First, That love that accompanies salvation is *a superlative love, a transcendent love.* True love to Christ doth wonderfully transcend and surpass the love of all relations; the love of father, mother, wife, child, brother, sister, yea, life itself, Mat. x. 37, 38, Luke xiv. 26, 27, 34. Ps. lxxiii. 25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.' Christ will be *Alexander* or *Nemo*, he will be all or nothing at all. There are the greatest causes of love, there are the highest causes of love, there are all the causes of love, to be found in Christ. In angels and men there are only some particular causes of love; all causes of love are eminently and only to be found in Christ:[1] Col. i. 19, 'It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell,' πλήρωμα. There is not only *plenitudo abundantiæ*, but *plenitudo redundantiæ*, an overflowing of fulness in Jesus Christ. All wisdom, all knowledge, all light, all life, all love, all goodness, all sweetness, all blessedness, all joys, all delights, all pleasures, all beauties, all beatitudes, all excellencies, all glories are in Christ, Col. ii. 9. The true lovers of Christ know that Christ loves as a head, as a king, as a father, as a husband, as a brother, as a kinsman, as a friend. The love of all relations meets in the love of Christ; and this raises up a believer to love Christ with a transcendent love. They know that Christ loves them more than they love themselves; yea, that he loves them above his very life, John x. 1, 17, 18. And *magnes amoris amor*, love is the loadstone of love.[2] Christ is amiable and lovely; he is famous and conspicuous; he is spotless and matchless in his names, in his natures, in his offices, in his graces, in his gifts, in his discoveries, in his appearances, in his ordinances. He is full of gravity, majesty, mercy, and glory. 'He is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.' His mouth is ממתקים, *sweetness;* yea, וכלו מחמדים, *all of him is desires*, or all of him is delights, Cant. v. 10–16. Christ is wholly delectable; he is altogether desirable from top to toe; he is amiable and lovely, he is glorious and excellent.[3] Christ is lovely, Christ is very lovely, Christ is most lovely, Christ is always lovely, Christ is altogether lovely. He

[1] Friends may have the milk of a believer's love, but Christ hath the cream.

[2] We so far love as we know, *Tantum diligimus, quantum cognoscimus. Certe non amat ille Christum, qui aliquid plusquam Christum amat.*—Augustine. Certainly they do not love Christ, who love anything more than Christ.

[3] He that holds not wholly with Christ, doth very shamefully neglect Christ. *Aut totum mecum tene, aut totum omitte.*—Greg. Nazianzen.

is 'the express image of God;' he is 'the brightness of his Father's glory.' If the soul can but anatomise him, it shall find in him all high perfections and supereminent excellencies. And upon these and such like considerations the saints are led forth to love Jesus Christ with a most transcendent love.

(2.) *The second property.* Secondly, That love that accompanies salvation is *obediential love, it is operative and working love.*[1] The love of Christ makes a man subject to the commands of Christ: 'If any man love me, he will keep my commandments;' and again, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me,' John xiv. 21. Divine love is very operative: Ps. cxvi. 1, 'I love the Lord,' says David. Well, but how doth this love work? Why, says he, 'I will walk in his ways, I will pay my vows, I will take the cup of salvation, I will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and I will call upon the name of the Lord as long as I live,' vers. 2, 9, 13, 14, 17. Divine love is not stinted nor limited to one sort of duty, but is free to all. He that loveth flieth, he that loveth runneth, he that loveth believeth, he that loveth rejoiceth, he that loveth mourneth, he that loveth giveth, he that loveth lendeth, he that loveth beareth, he that loveth waiteth, he that loveth hopeth, &c. Heb. vi. 10, 'For God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love.' Love makes the soul laborious. That love that accompanies salvation is very active and operative. It is like the virtuous woman in the Proverbs, that set all her maidens on work. It is never quiet, but in doing the will of God. It will not suffer any grace to sit idle in the soul. It will egg and put on all other graces to act and operate. Love sets faith upon drawing from Christ, and patience upon waiting on Christ, and humility upon submitting to Christ, and godly sorrow upon mourning over Christ, and self-denial upon forsaking of the nearest and dearest comforts for Christ, &c. As the sun makes the earth fertile, so doth divine love make the soul fruitful in works of righteousness and holiness. He that loves cannot be idle nor barren. Love makes the soul constant and abundant in well-doing: 2 Cor. v. 14, 'The love of Christ constraineth us.'[2] It doth urge us and put us forward; it carries us on as men possessed with a vehemency of spirit, or as a ship which is driven with strong winds towards the desired haven. Natural love makes the child, the servant, the wife, obedient; so doth divine love make the soul better at obeying than at disputing. A soul that loves Christ will never cease to obey till he ceases to be. That love that accompanies salvation is like the sun. The sun, you know, casteth his beams upward and downward, to the east and to the west, to the north and to the south; so the love of a saint ascends to God above, and descends to men on earth; to our friends on the right hand, to our enemies on the left hand; to them that are in a state of grace, and to them that are in a state of nature. Divine love will still be a-working one way or another.[3]

[1] I have read a story of an elephant, who being fallen down, and unable to help himself, or get up again, by reason of the inflexibleness of his legs, a forester coming by, helped him up; wherewith the elephant, by the very instinct of nature, was so affected, that he followed this man, and would do anything for him, and never left him till his dying day. Ah, sirs, will not divine love make a man do more?

[2] συνέχει. Love's property is to do eternally. It is an eternal, lasting principle, and actions will last as long as principles; its action is as abiding as itself.

[3] *Beatus qui amat te, et amicos in te, et inimicos propter te.*—Augustine: *Confess.*

(3.) *The third property.* That love that accompanies salvation is *a sincere and incorrupt love:* Eph. vi. 24, 'Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.'[1] The true bred Christian *amat Christum propter Christum,* loves Christ for Christ; he loves Christ for that internal and eternal worth that is in him; he loves him for his incomparable excellency and beauty, for that transcendent sweetness, loveliness, holiness, and goodness that is in him; he is none of those that loves Christ for loaves, neither will he with Judas kiss Christ and betray him; nor yet will he with those in the Gospel cry out, 'Hosanna, Hosanna,' one day, and 'Crucify him, crucify him,' the next, Mat. xxi. 9, 15. They love Christ with a virgin love: Cant. i. 3, 'The virgins love thee.' They love thee in much sincerity, purity, and integrity; they love thee for that fragrant savour, for that natural sweetness, for that incomparable goodness that is in thee. So ver. 4, 'The upright love thee,' or as it is in the Hebrew, 'Uprightnesses love thee,' מישרים. Uprightnesses being put for upright ones, the abstract for the concrete; or, 'They love thee in uprightnesses,' that is, most uprightly, most entirely, most sincerely, and not as hypocrites, who love thee for base, carnal respects; who love thee in compliment, but not in realities; who love thee in word and tongue, but despise thee in heart and life; who love the gift more than the giver. That love that accompanies salvation is real and cordial love, it is sincere and upright love, it makes the soul love Christ, the giver, more than the gift; it makes the soul love the gift for the giver's sake; it will make the soul to love the giver without his gifts. And verily, they shall not be long without good gifts from Christ, that love Christ more than his gifts.[2]

Vespasian commanded a liberal reward should be given to a woman that came and professed that she was in love with him; and when his steward asked him what *item* he should put to it in his book of accounts, the emperor answered, *Vespasiano adamato,* item to her that loved Vespasian.[3] Ah, Christians, shall Vespasian, an heathen prince, reward her liberally that loved his person? and will not the Lord Jesus much more reward them with his choicest gifts, that love him more than his gifts? Surely Christ will not be worse than a heathen, he will not act below a heathen! He shall never be a loser that loves Christ for that spiritual sweetness and loveliness that is in Christ; Christ will not live long in that man's debts.

(4.) *The fourth property.* Fourthly, That love that accompanies salvation is *a vehement love, an ardent love.* It is a spark of heavenly fire, and it puts all the affections into a holy flame: Cant. i. 7, 'Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest?' &c. This amiable, amorous, pathetical compellation, 'O thou whom my soul

[1] ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ, word for word, in incorruption, or with incorruption; *i. e.* that love Christ in sincerity, and not feignedly and hypocritically.

[2] Judas was kin to the bag, he was not kin to Christ; and he in Clement was not his, but his riches', kinsman. Christ hath many such kinsmen. A Christian cares not for anything that hath not *aliquid Christi,* something of Christ in it. He says with him, *Sine Deo omnis copia est egestas,* without Christ, all plenty is scarcity. Austin prays: Lord, saith he, whatever thou hast given, take all away; only, only give me thyself, God gave him himself, and cast in many other mercies, as paper and packthread, into the bargain.—[Confessions.—G.]

[3] Suetonius: *Vespasian.*—G.

loveth,' speaks the spouse's love to be hot and burning towards Christ,[1] So in Isa. xxvi. 8, 9, 'The desire of our souls is towards thee, and to the remembrance of thy name. With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me, will I seek thee early.'[2] This affectionate, this passionate form of speech, 'With my soul have I desired thee,' and that, 'with my spirit within me will I seek thee,' does elegantly set forth the vehement and ardent love of the church to Christ; so doth that pathetical exclamation of the church, 'Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love,' Cant. ii. 5. The betrothed virgin cannot shew more strong and vehement love to her beloved, than by being sick and surprised with love-qualms, when she meets him, when she enjoys him. It was so here with the spouse of Christ. The love of Christ to believers, is a vehement love, an ardent love—witness his leaving his Father's bosom, his putting upon us his royal robes, his bleeding, his dying, &c. And it doth naturally beget vehement and ardent love in all the beloved of God. Where Christ loves, he always begets somewhat like himself, *Amor semper habet, quid sui simile.*[3] That love that is flat, lukewarm, or cold, will leave a man to freeze a-this side heaven, it will fit him for the warmest place in hell. Dives's love was very cold, and he found the flames of hell to be very hot. That love that accompanies salvation is full of heat and fire.

(5.) *The fifth property.* Fifthly, That love that accompanies salvation is *lasting love, it is permanent love.* The objects of it are lasting, the springs and causes of it are lasting, the nature of it is lasting. The primitive Christians loved not their lives unto the death, Rev. xii. 11. Persecutors have taken away the martyrs' lives for Christ, but could never destroy their love to Christ: Eph. vi. 24, 'Grace be with all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity,' or, 'in incorruption,' as the Greek word signifies; whereby the apostle gives us to understand, that true love to Christ is not liable to corruption, putrefaction, or decay, but is constant and permanent, lasting, yea, everlasting.[4]

That love that accompanies salvation is like to the oil in the cruse and the meal in the barrel, that wasted not; it is like the apple-tree of Persia, that buddeth, blossometh, and beareth fruit every month; it is like the lamp in the story, that never went out; it is like the stone in Thracia, that neither burneth in the fire, nor sinketh in the water:[5] Cant. viii. 6, 7, 'Love is stronger than death, many waters cannot quench it, nor the floods cannot drown it. If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be contemned.'[6] Love will outlive all enemies, temptations, oppositions, afflictions, persecutions, dangers, and deaths. Love's motto is *Nulli cedo*, I yield to none. Love is like the sun; the sun beginning to ascend in his circle, never goes back till he comes to the highest degree thereof.

[1] *Anima est ubi amat, non ubi animat*, the soul is where it loves, not where it lives.

[2] בקרבי, in the midst of me. It is an emphatical phrase.

[3] *Amor non nisi donum amantis.*—Gul. Par.

[4] 1 Cor. xiii. 8. Love never faileth, or as it is in the Greek, οὐδέποτε ἐκπίπτει, never falleth away, but shall last for ever in heaven; in which respect the apostle lifts it up above faith, hope, and all the common gifts of the Spirit, in the same chapter.

[5] Asbestos.—G.

[6] בוז יבוזו, contemning, it would be contemned. *Omnia vincit amor*, love rides in her char[1]ot of triumph over all calamities and miseries, and cries, Victory, victory!

True love abhors apostasy, it ascends to more perfection, and ceases not until, like Elijah's fiery chariot, it hath carried the soul to heaven.

Many men's love to Christ is like the morning dew; it is like Jonah's gourd, that came up in a night and vanished in a night. But that love that accompanies salvation is like Ruth's love, a lasting and an abiding love, Ruth i. It is love that will bed and board with the soul, that will lie down and rise up with the soul, that will to the fire, to the prison, to the grave, to heaven with the soul.

(6.) *The sixth property.* Sixthly, that love that accompanies salvation, is *an abounding love, an increasing love.* Love in a saint, is like the waters in Noah's time, that rose higher and higher. The very nature of true love is to abound and rise higher and higher. Philip. i. 9, 'This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more.'[1]

The longer a believer lives, the more eminent and excellent causes of love he sees in Christ. Christ discovers himself gradually to the soul. Now a believer's love to Christ rises answerable to the causes of love that he sees in Christ. The more light the more love. Knowledge and love, like the water and the ice, beget each other.

Man loves Christ by knowing, and knows Christ by loving. Man's love is answerable to his light. He cannot love much that knows but little; he cannot love little that knows much.[2] As a man rises higher and higher in his apprehensions of Christ, so he cannot but rise higher and higher in his affections to Christ. Again, the daily mercies and experiences that they have of the love of Christ, of the care of Christ, of the bowels and compassions of Christ, working more and more towards them, cannot but raise their affections more and more to him. As fire is increased by adding of fuel unto it, so is our love to Christ, upon fresh and new manifestations of his great love toward us. As the husband abounds in his love to his wife, so the wife rises in her love to her husband. The more love the father manifests to the child, the more the ingenuous child rises in his affections to him. So the more love the Lord Jesus shews to us, the more he is beloved by us. Christ shewed much love to Mary Magdalene, and this raises in her much love to Christ. 'She loved much, for much was forgiven her,' Luke vii. 47, 48. As the Israelites, Num. xxxiii. 29, removed their tents from Mithcah to Hashmonah, from *sweetness* to *swiftness*, as the words import, so the sweetness of divine love manifested to the soul makes the soul more sweet, swift, and high in the exercise and actings of love towards Christ. A soul under special manifestations of love, weeps that it can love Christ no more. Mr Welch, a Suffolk minister, weeping at table, and being asked the reason of it, answered, it was because he could love Christ no more. The true lovers of Christ can never rise high enough in their love to Christ; they count a little love to be no love; great love to be but little; strong love to be but weak; and the highest love to be infinitely below the worth of Christ, the beauty and glory of Christ, the fulness, sweetness, and goodness of Christ. The top of their misery in this life is, that they love so little, though they are so much beloved.

(7.) *The seventh property.* Seventhly and lastly, that love that

[1] This is clear throughout the whole book of Canticles, as all may run and read.

[2] *Amat Deus? non aliunde hoc habet; sed ipse est unde amat.*—Augustine.

accompanies salvation, *is open love, it is manifest love, it is love that cannot be hid, that cannot be covered and buried.* It is like the sun, it will shine forth, and shew itself to all the world. A man cannot love Christ, but he will shew it in these, and such like things as follow:

First, Divine love makes the soul even *ready to break, in longing after a further, clearer, and fuller enjoyment of Christ.* The voice of divine love is, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly,' Rev. xxii. 20. 'Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountain of spices,' Cant. viii. 14.[1] 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which for me is best of all,' Philip. i. 23. It is a mercy, says Paul, for Christ to be with me, but it is a greater mercy for me to be with Christ. I desire to die, that I may see my Saviour; I refuse to live, that I may live with my Redeemer.

Love desires and endeavours for ever to be present, to converse with, to enjoy, to be closely and eternally united to its object, Christ. The longing of the espoused maid for the marriage day, of the traveller for his inn, of the mariner for his haven, of the captive for his ransom, &c., is not to be compared to the longings of the lovers of Christ, after a further and fuller enjoyment of Christ.[2]

The lovers of Christ do well know, that till they are taken up into glory, their chains will not fall off; till then their glorious robes shall not be put on; till then all sorrow and tears shall not be wiped from their eyes; till then their joy will not be full, their comforts pure, their peace lasting, their graces perfect; and this makes them look and long after the enjoyment of the person of Christ.[3]

It was a notable saying of one, 'Let all the devils in hell,' saith he, 'beset me round; let fasting macerate my body; let sorrows oppress my mind; let pains consume my flesh; let watchings dry me, or heat scorch me, or cold freeze me, let all these, and what can come more, happen unto me, so I may enjoy my Saviour.'

Secondly, Love to Christ shews itself by *working the soul to abase itself, that Christ may be exalted, to lessen itself to greaten Christ, to cloud itself that Christ alone may shine.* Love cares not what it is, nor what it doth, so it may but advance the Lord Jesus; it makes the soul willing to be a footstool for Christ, to be anything, to be nothing, that Christ may be all in all.[4]

Thirdly, That love that accompanies salvation, sometimes shews itself by working the soul *to be cheerful and resolute, to be patient and constant in sufferings for Christ*: 1 Cor. xiii. 7, 'Love endureth all things.' Love will not complain, love will not say the burden is too great, the prison is too dark, the furnace is too hot, the chains are too heavy, the cup is too bitter, &c., Acts xxi. 13. A true lover of Christ can slight his life, out of love to Christ, as that blessed virgin in Basil, who, being condemned for Christianity to the fire, and having her estate and life offered her, if she would worship idols, cried, 'Let money perish, and life vanish, Christ is better than all.'

[1] ברח דודי, Flee away speedily, my beloved.
[2] Austin longed to see that head that was crowned with thorns. [Confessions.—G.]
[3] God hath reserved the best wine, the best things, till last.
[4] Rev. iv. 10, 11; John iii. 26–31; Philip. iii. 7, 8.

So Alice Driver said, 'I drove my father's plough often, yet I can die for Christ as soon as any of you all.'[1] That love that accompanies salvation, makes a Christian free and forward in suffering anything that makes for the glory of Christ.

Fourthly, that love that accompanies salvation, shews itself by working the soul *to be pleased or displeased, as Christ is pleased or displeased.* A soul that loves Christ hath his eye upon Christ, and that which makes Christ frown makes him frown, and what makes Christ smile makes him smile. Love is impatient of anything that may displease a beloved Christ.

Look what Harpalus once said, *Quod regi placet, mihi placet,* what pleaseth the king pleaseth me, that says a true lover of Christ, What pleaseth Christ, that pleaseth me.[2] Holiness pleaseth Christ and holiness pleaseth me, says a lover of Christ. It pleaseth Christ to overcome evil with good, to overcome hatred with love, enmity with amity, pride with humility, passion with meekness, &c., and the same pleaseth me, says a lover of Christ. 1 John iv. 17, 'As he is, so are we in this world.' Our love answers to Christ's love, and our hatred answers to Christ's hatred; he loves all righteousness and hates all wickedness; so do we, say the lovers of Christ, Ps. cxix. 113, 128, 163.

It is said of Constantine's children, that they resembled their father to the life, that they put him wholly on.[3] The true lovers of Christ resemble Christ to the life, and they put him wholly on. Hence it is that they are called Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 12.

Fifthly, True love to Christ shews itself sometimes by working the lovers of Christ *to expose themselves to suffering, to save Christ from suffering in his glory;* to adventure the loss of their own crowns, to keep Christ's crown upon his head; to adventure drowning, to save Christ's honour from sinking. Thus did the three children, Daniel, Moses, and other worthies, Heb. xi.

I have read of a servant who dearly loved his master, and knowing that his master was looked for by his enemies, he put on his master's clothes, and was taken for his master, and suffered death for him.

Divine love will make a man do as much for Christ; it will make a man hang for Christ and burn for Christ: Rev. xii. 11, 'They loved not their lives unto the death.' Christ and his truth was dearer to them than their lives. They slighted, contemned, yea, despised their very lives, when they stood in competition with Christ and his glory, and chose rather to suffer the greatest misery than that Christ should lose the least dram of his glory.

Sixthly, That love that accompanies salvation shews itself sometimes by working the lovers of Christ *to be affected and afflicted with the dishonours that are done to Christ:* Ps. cxix. 136, 'Mine eyes run down with rivers of tears, because men keep not thy law,' Jer. ix. 1, 2. So Lot's soul was vexed, racked, and tortured with the filthy conversation of the wicked Sodomites, 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8.[4] The turning of his own flesh,

[1] Clarke, as before, p. 504.—G.

[2] It is a saying in natural philosophy, that it is *Naturalissimum opus viventis generare sibi simile,* the most natural act or work of every living thing to produce another like unto itself, Ps. xlv. 7; and cxix. 104, 113, 128, 163. [3] Eusebius, in his Ecclesiastical History.

[4] ἰβασταvίζειν signifies two things: (1.) the search and examination of a thing; (2.) the racking and vexing a man upon the trial.

his wife, into a pillar of salt did not vex him, but their sins did rack his righteous soul: Ps. lxix. 9, 'The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me.' A woman is most wounded in her husband, so is a Christian in his Christ. Though Moses was as a dumb child in his own cause, yet when the Israelites, by making and dancing about their golden calf, had wounded the honour and glory of God, he shews himself to be much affected and afflicted for the dishonour done to God. The statue of Apollo is said to shed tears for the afflictions of the Grecians, though he could not help them; so a true lover of Christ will shed tears for those dishonours that are done to Christ, though he knows not how to prevent them.[1] It is between Christ and his lovers as it is between two lute strings that are tuned one to another; no sooner one is struck, but the other trembles; so no sooner is Christ struck, but a Christian trembles, and no sooner is a Christian struck, but Christ trembles: 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' Acts ix. 4.

Seventhly, That love that accompanies salvation doth shew itself by working the soul *to observe with a curious critical eye Christ's countenance and carriage, and by causing the soul to be sad or cheerful, as Christ's carriage and countenance is towards the soul.* When Christ looks sad, and carries it sadly, then to be sad, as Peter was: Christ cast a sad look upon him, and that made his heart sad; he went forth and wept bitterly.[2] And when Christ looks sweetly, and speaks kindly, and carries it lovingly, then to be cheerful and joyful, as the church was in Cant. iii. 4, 'It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.' So the church in Isa. lxi. 10, 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.'[3] A true lover of Christ hath still his eye upon Christ, and as his countenance stands, so is he glad or sad, cheerful or sorrowful. Tigranes in Xenophon coming to redeem his father and friends, with his wife, that were taken prisoners by King Cyrus, was asked among other questions this, viz., what ransom he would give for his wife? he answered he would redeem her liberty with his own life. But having prevailed for all their liberties, as they returned together, every one commended Cyrus for a goodly man, and Tigranes would needs know of his wife what she thought of him. 'Truly,' said she, 'I cannot tell, for I did not so much as look on him or see him.' 'Whom then,' said he, wondering, 'did you look upon? 'Whom should I look upon,' said she, 'but him that would have redeemed my liberty with the loss of his own life.'[4] So a Christian, a

[1] Though king Crœsus his son were dumb all his lifetime, yet when one would have struck at his father, the affection that he had to his father broke the bars of his speech, and he cried out, Take heed of killing the king. You know how to apply it. [Cf. Sibbes, vol. vii. note *i*, p. 252.—G.]

[2] *Ubi amor, ibi oculus*, as love came in by the eye, so it delights by the same door to run out to Christ.

[3] שוש אשיש, in rejoicing, I will rejoice; that is, I will exceedingly rejoice.

[4] Plutarch. *Lucull.*—G.

true lover of Christ, esteems nothing worth a looking upon but Christ, who hath redeemed him with his own blood.

Eighthly, That love that accompanies salvation, *reaches forth a hand of kindness to those that bear the image of Christ.*[1] 1 John v. 1, 2, 'Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?'

Now, because many mistake in their love to the saints, and the consequences that follow that mistake are very dangerous and pernicious to the souls of men, I shall therefore briefly hint to you the properties of that love to the saints that accompanies salvation. And,

(1.) *The first property.* The first is this, true love to the saints is *spiritual;* it is a love for the image of God that is stamped upon the soul. Col. i. 8, 'Epaphras hath declared to us your love in the Spirit.' A soul that truly loves, loves the Father for his own sake, and the children for the Father's sake. Many there are that love Christians for their goods, not for their good; they love them for the money that is in their purse, but not for the grace that is in their hearts. Many, like the Bohemian cur, fawn upon a good suit. Love to the saints, for the image of God stamped upon them, is a flower that grows not in nature's garden. No man can love grace in another man's heart but he that hath grace in his own. Men doth not more naturally love their parents, and love their children, and love themselves, than they do naturally hate the image of God upon his people and ways.[2] True love is for what of the divine nature, for what of Christ and grace shines in a man. It is one thing to love a godly man, and another thing to love him for godliness. Many love godly men as they are politicians, or potent, or learned, or of a sweet nature, but all this is but natural love; but to love them because they are spiritually lovely, because they are 'all glorious within, and their raiment is of embroidered gold,' Ps. xlv. 13, is to love them as becometh saints; it is to love them at so high and noble a rate that no hypocrite in the world can reach to it. The wasps fly about the tradesman's shop, not out of love to him, but the honey and the fruit that is there. This age is full of such wasps.

(2.) *The second property.* Secondly, True love to the saints is *universal to one Christian as well as another, to all as well as any;*[3] to poor Lazarus as well as to rich Abraham, to a despised Job as well as to an admired David, to an afflicted Joseph as well as to a raised Jacob, to a despised disciple as well as to an exalted apostle. Philip. iv. 21, 'Salute every saint,' the meanest as well as the richest, the weakest as well as the strongest, the lowest as well as the highest. They have all the same Spirit, the same Jesus, the same faith; they are all fellow-members, fellow-travellers, fellow-soldiers, fellow-citizens, fellow-heirs, and therefore must they all be loved with a sincere and cordial love.

[1] Jerome professed how much he loved Christ in Augustine, and Augustine in Christ.

[2] Remember, wicked men, God himself is wronged by the injury that is done to his image. The contempt and despite is done to the king himself, which is done to his image or coin.

[3] Eph. i. 15, Col. i. 4. It was the glory of the Ephesians and Colossians that their faith and love reached to all the saints; it was not narrow, and confined to some particulars, but it was universal.

The apostle James doth roundly condemn that partial love that was among professors in his days, James ii. 1, 2. Not that the apostle doth absolutely prohibit a civil differencing of men in place from others, but when the rich man's wealth is more regarded than the poor man's godliness, and when men carry it so to the rich, as to cast scorn, contempt, disgrace, and discouragement upon the godly poor; this is a sin for which God will visit the sons of pride.[1]

Pompey told his Cornelia, 'It is no praise for thee to have loved *Pompeium Magnum*, Pompey the Great, but if thou lovest *Pompeium Miserum*, Pompey the Miserable, thou shalt be a pattern for imitation to all posterity.' I will leave you to apply it.

Romanus the martyr, who was born of noble parentage, entreated his persecutors that they would not favour him for his nobility: 'For it is not,' said he, 'the blood of my ancestors, but my Christian faith, that makes me noble.'[2]

Verily, he that loves one saint for the grace that is in him, for that holiness, that image of God, that is upon him, he cannot but fall in love with every saint that bears the lovely image of the Father upon him; he cannot but love a saint in rags, as well as a saint in robes; a saint upon the dunghill, as well as a saint upon the throne. Usually the most ragged Christians are the richest Christians; they usually have most of heaven that have least of earth, James ii. 5. The true diamond shines best in the dark.[3]

(3.) *The third property.* Thirdly, Our love to the saints is right, *when we love them and delight in them, answerable to the spiritual causes of love that shine in them*, as the more holy and gracious they are, the more we love them:[4] Ps. xvi. 2, 3, 'My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.' This is most certain, if godliness be the reason why we love any, then the more any excel others in the love, spirit, power, and practice of godliness, the more we should love them. There are those that seem to love such godly men as are weak in their judgments, low in their principles, and dull in their practices, and yet look with a squint eye upon those that are more sound in their judgments, more high in their principles, and more holy in their practices, which doubtless speaks out more hypocrisy than sincerity. Verily, he hath either no grace, or but a little grace, that doth not love most where the spiritual causes of love do most shine and appear. Surely those Christians are under a very great distemper of spirit, that envy those gifts and graces of God in others, that outshine their own. John's disciples muttered and murmured, because Christ had more followers and admirers than John; and John's disciples are not all dead, yea, they seem to have a new resurrection in these days. Well,

[1] *Non gens sed mens, non genus sed genius*, not race or place, but grace, truly sets forth a man. [2] Clarke, as before, p. 53.—G.

[3] Yet there is a love of familiarity, which we may lawfully shew more to one godly man than to another. Thus Christ loved John more than the other disciples.

[4] Yet this must be granted, that grace in a rugged, unhewn nature, is like a gold ring on a leprous hand, or a diamond set in iron. As a gold ring is most pleasing and taking, when it is on a neat clean hand, and as a diamond when it is set in a ring of gold; so grace is most pleasing and taking to us in a sweet nature, and not so much when it is in a rugged, unhewn nature; the beauty and glory of it being clouded and darkened by a rugged nature.

as the fairest day hath its clouds, the finest linen its spots, the richest jewels their flaws, the sweetest fruits their worms, so when precious Christians are under temptations, they may, and too often do envy and repine at those excellent graces, abilities, and excellencies that cloud, darken, and outshine their own. The best of men are too full of pride and self-love, and that makes them sometimes cast dirt and disgrace upon that excellency that themselves want, as that great man that could not write his own name, and yet called the liberal arts a public poison and pestilence.[1] There is no greater argument that our grace is true, and that we do love others for grace's sake, than our loving them best that have most grace, though they have least of worldly goods. A pearl is rich, if found on a dunghill, though it may glitter more when set in a ring of gold; so many a poor believer is rich and glorious in the eye of Christ, and should be so in ours, though, like Job, he sits upon a dunghill, though to the world he may seem to glister most when adorned with riches, honour, and outward pomp, &c.

(4.) *The fourth property.* Fourthly, True love to saints is *constant*: 1 Cor. xiii. 8, 'Love never faileth.' It continues for ever in heaven. That love was never true that is not constant. Heb. xiii. 1, 'Let brotherly love continue.' True love is constant in prosperity and adversity, in storms and calms, in health and sickness, in presence and in absence.[2] 'Thy own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not.' 'A friend,' says the wise man, 'loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity,' Prov. xvii. 17. Prosperity makes friends, and adversity will try friends. A true friend is neither known in prosperity, nor hid in adversity.

True love is like to that of Ruth's to Naomi, and that of Jonathan's to David, permanent and constant. Many there be whose love to the saints is like Job's brooks, Job vi. 15, 16, which in winter when we have no need, overflows with tenders of service and shews of love; but when the season is hot and dry, and the poor thirsty traveller stands in most need of water to refresh him, then the brooks are quite dried up. They are like the swallow that will stay by you in the summer, but fly from you in the winter.

It is observed by Josephus of the Samaritans, that whenever the Jews' affairs prospered, they would be their friends, and profess much love to them; but if the Jews were in trouble, and wanted their assistance, then they would not own them, nor have anything to do with them. This age is full of such Samaritans, yet, such as truly love will always love.[3] In the primitive times it was very much taken notice of by the very heathen, that in the depth of misery, when fathers and mothers forsook their children, Christians, otherwise strangers, stuck close to one another; their love of religion, and one of another, proved firmer than that of nature. 'They seem to take away the sun out of the world,'

[1] Eusebius speaks of him in his Ecclesiastical History. [*As before:* Cf. Index.—G.]

[2] Consalus, a Spanish bishop and inquisitor, wondered how the Christians had that commandment, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, so indelibly printed on their hearts, that no torture could blot it out, and make them confess and betray one another, or cease from loving one another. [Rather Consalvus or Gonsalvus Reginaldus, 1567. —G.]

[3] Augustus Cæsar was a constant friend to those whom he loved; he used to say, *Amare nec cito desisto, nec temere incipio*, late ere I love, as long ere I leave. [Samaritans: Antiq. b. ix. c. xiv. sec. 3: Cf. also xi. c. viii. sec. 6, and xii. c. v., and Sibbes, iii. p. 475.—G.]

said the orator, 'who taketh away friendship from the life of men,'[1] and we do not more need fire and water than constant friendship.

Ninthly, That love that accompanies salvation, doth manifest and shew itself by working the soul *to be quiet and still under Christ's rebukes*. Peter sits down quiet under a threefold reproof, 'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee,' John xxi. 16–18. So Eli, 'It is the Lord, let him do what seems good in his own eyes,' 1 Sam. iii. 18. And Aaron 'held his peace,' when he saw the flames about his sons' ears, Lev. x. 3. So David, 'I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it,' Ps. xxxix. 9. The lovers of Christ are like the Scythian, that went naked in the snow; and when Alexander wondered how he could endure it, he answered, 'I am all forehead.' Oh the lovers of Christ are all forehead, to bear the rebukes of the Lord Jesus.

The lovers of Christ know that all his rebukes are from love; 'whom he loves, he rebukes,' Rev. iii. 19; they can see smiles through Christ's frowns; they know, that to argue that Christ hates them because he rebukes them, is the devil's logic; they know, that all the rebukes of Christ are in order to their internal and eternal good, and that quiets them; they know that all the rebukes of Christ are but forerunners of some glorious manifestations of greater love to their souls. Ps. lxxi. 20, 21, 'Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.' They know that it is the sorest judgment in the world, to go on freely in a way of sin without rebukes. 'Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone,' Hosea iv. 17. And therefore they keep silence before the Lord, they lay one hand upon their mouths, and the other upon their hearts, and so sit mute before the holy one.

Tenthly, That love that accompanies salvation, shews itself by working the heart *to be affected and afflicted with the least dishonours that are done to Christ*. Love is curious of little things; it is as much afflicted with an idle word or with an impure dream, as lovers of Christ are with adultery or blasphemy. David did but cut off the lap of Saul's garment, and his heart smote him, 1 Sam. xxiv. 5; though he did it to convince Saul of his false jealousy, and his own innocency. Love will not allow of the least infirmity. Rom. vii. 15, 'That which I do, I allow not.' Love will make a man aim at angelical purity and perfect innocency; love will be getting up to the top of Jacob's ladder; love can rest in nothing below perfection; love makes a man look more at what he should be than at what he is; it makes a man strive as for life, to imitate the highest examples, and to write after the choicest copies. Love fears every image of offence, it trembles at the appearance of one, it doth not, it cannot allow itself to do anything that looks like sin;[2] it hates 'the garment spotted with the flesh;' it shuns the occasions of sin as it shuns hell itself. This is the divine curiosity and glory of a Christian's love. Love says it is better to die with hunger than to eat that which is offered to idols.[3]

[1] Cicero, *De Amicitia*.—G.

[2] The sin, and the coat of sin, is to be hated, saith Ambrose.

[3] *Melius mori fame, quam idolothytis vesci*.—Augustine.

I have read of a holy man,[1] who, out of his love to Christ and hatred of idolatry, would not give one halfpenny toward the building of an idol's temple, though he was provoked thereunto by intolerable torments. Love knows that the least evils are contrary to the greatest good;[2] they are contrary to the nature of Christ, the commands of Christ, the spirit of Christ, the grace of Christ, the glory of Christ, the blood of Christ. Love knows that little dishonours, if I may call any sin little, make way for greater, as little thieves unlock the door and make way for greater. Love knows that little sins multiplied become great. As love knows that there is nothing lesser than a grain of sand; so love knows that there is nothing heavier than the sand of the sea, when multiplied.

Eleventhly, That love that accompanies salvation, will shew itself by *keeping the doors of the heart shut against those treacherous lovers that would draw the heart from Christ.* Love is a golden key to let in Christ, and a strong lock to keep out others. Though many may knock at love's door, yet love will open to none but Christ: Cant. v. 6, 'I opened to my beloved;' and viii. 7, 'Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned;' *Boz Jabuzu,* contemning it would be contemned. When the world would buy his love, he cries out with Peter, 'Thy money perish with thee,' Acts viii. 20. Love makes a man look with a holy scorn and disdain upon all persons and things, that attempt either to force or flatter her out of her love and loyalty to her beloved.[3] It is neither force nor fraud, it is neither promises nor threatenings, it is neither the cross nor the crown, the palace nor the prison, the rod nor the robe, the hempen[4] halter nor the golden chain, that will make love embrace a stranger in the room of Christ. Go, says divine love, offer your gold and empty glories to others; your pleasures and your treasures to others; put on your lion's skin and fright others; as for my part, I scorn and contemn your golden offers, and I disdain and deride your rage and threats. Love makes a man too noble, too high, too gallant, and too faithful, to open to any lover but Christ, to let any lie between the breasts but Christ: Cant. i. 13, 'A bundle of myrrh is my beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.' When Basil was tempted with money and preferment, he answers, *Pecuniam da quæ permaneat, ac continuo duret, gloriam quæ semper floreat:* Give money that may last for ever, and glory that may eternally flourish. Love makes a man cry out when tempted, Let not any man think that he will embrace other men's goods to forsake Christ, who hath forsaken his own proper goods to follow Christ.[5] Love makes a man cry out when tempted, as that worthy convert did, *Ego non sum ego,* I am not the man that I was; when my heart was void of divine love, I was as easily conquered as I was tempted. Oh but now he hath shed abroad his love in my soul, I am not the man that I was, I had rather die than fly, or fall before a temptation.

Twelfthly, That love that accompanies salvation, shews itself by

[1] Marcus Arethusius, in Julian's time. [Clarke, as before.—G.]
[2] The Nicene fathers would not gratify Arius, no, not in one tittle.
[3] So did Luther, Galeacius [Carraciolus], that noble Italian. [Cf. Sibbes, vol. i., pp. 289, 290, note *d.*—G.]
[4] Spelled 'hempton.'—G.
[5] Plato, saith Pliny, took as much delight and glory in those dignities and honours he denied, as he did in those he did enjoy. It is just so with the saints.

secret visits, by secret expressions of love. A soul that truly loves Christ, loves to meet him in a corner, to meet him behind the door, Cant. ii. 14, to meet him in the clefts of the rock, where no eye sees, nor no ear hears, nor no heart observes, Mat. vi. 6. Feigned love is much in commending and kissing Christ upon the stage; but unfeigned love is much in embracing and weeping over Christ in a closet. The Pharisee loved to stand praying in the market-place and in the temple, Mat. vi. 2; but Nathanael was with Christ under the fig-tree, John i. 48; and Cornelius was at it in the corner of his house, Acts x.; and Peter was at it on the leads; and the spouse was at it in the villages, Cant. vii. 11. Souls that truly love Christ, are much in secret visits, in secret prayer, in secret sighing, in secret groaning, in secret mourning, &c. True love is good at bolting of the door, and is always best when it is most with Christ in a corner. The secret discoveries that Christ makes to souls, do much oblige them to closet services.

Arcesilaus in Plutarch,[1] visiting his sick friend, and perceiving his necessity that he wanted, and yet his modesty that he was ashamed to ask, that he might satisfy the one and yet salve the other, secretly conveyed money under his pillow, which his friend finding after he was gone, was wont to say, 'Arcesilaus stole this.' So Christ steals secret kindnesses upon his people, and that draws them out to be much in secret, in closet services.

Thirteenthly, That love that accompanies salvation, shews itself *by breathing after more clear evidence and full assurance of Christ's love to the soul.* Divine love would fain have her drop turned into an ocean, her spark into a flame, her penny into a pound, her mite into a million. A soul that truly loves, can never see enough, nor never taste enough, nor never feel enough, nor never enjoy enough of the love of Christ; when once they have found his love to be better than wine, then nothing will satisfy them but the kisses of his mouth: Cant. i. 2, 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.' Not with a kiss, but with the kisses of his mouth. A soul once kissed by Christ, can never have enough of the kisses of Christ; his lips drop myrrh and mercy; no kisses to the kisses of Christ. The more any soul loves Christ, the more serious, studious, and industrious will that soul be to have the love of Christ discovered, confirmed, witnessed, and sealed to it.[2] That is a sweet word of the spouse: Cant. viii. 6, 'Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm; for love is strong as death.' Set me as a seal upon thy heart; that is, let me be deeply engraven as a seal into thy heart and affections; let the love and remembrance of me make a deep impression in thee, and set me as a seal or signet on thy arm.

[1.] The seal, you know, is for ratifying, confirming, and making sure of things. Oh! says the spouse, establish and confirm me in thy love, and in the outward expressions and manifestations of it.

[2.] Seals among the Jews were used not as ornaments only, but as monuments of love that were continually in sight and remembrance. Oh! says the church, let me be still in thy sight and remembrance as a monument of thy love. In the old law, you know, the high priest did

[1] Founder of the New Academy.—G.

[2] The more a virgin's love is drawn out to another, the more she desires to be confirmed and assured of his love to her.

bear the name of Israel engraven on stones upon his heart and shoulder for a memorial, Exodus xxviii. 11, 12, 21, 29. Ah! says the church, let my name be deeply engraven upon thy heart, let me be always in thy eye, let me be always a memorial upon thy shoulder.

[3.] Great men have their signets upon their hands in precious esteem: Jer. xxii. 24, 'As I live, saith the Lord, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence.' Ah! says the spouse, Oh highly prize me, Lord Jesus! highly esteem of me; oh let me be as dear and precious unto thee as the signet that thou carriest about with thee, or as signets are to great men that wear them!

Lastly, That love that accompanies salvation, shews itself by working a true lover of Christ *to commit his richest treasures, his choicest jewels, to the care and custody of Christ.*[1] Where we love we will trust, and as we love we will trust. Little trust speaks out little love, great trust speaks out great love. The lovers of Christ commend to Christ's care their pearls of greatest price, their names, their lives, their souls, their crowns, their innocency, their all. It was a notable saying of Luther, 'Let him that died for my soul see to the salvation of it.' Cæsar received not his wounds from the swords of enemies, but from the hands of friends, that is, from trusting in them. Oh, but the lovers of Christ shall never receive any wounds by trusting in Christ, by committing their choicest jewels to his care; for he hath a powerful hand and a wise and loving heart! Christ will hold fast whatever the Father or the saints put into his hand.

And thus I have shewed you what that love is that doth accompany salvation.

I come now, in the sixth place, to shew you what prayer that is that doth accompany salvation. But I see that I must contract what remains into a narrow room, lest I should tire out both the reader and myself, which, that I may not, I shall endeavour by divine assistance to mind brevity in what remains.

Now, that prayer doth accompany salvation, I have formerly shewed. Now I am briefly to shew you what prayer that is that doth accompany salvation, and that I shall do in these following particulars.

(1.) *The first property.* First, *Prayer is a divine worship wherein we speak to God in faith, humility, sincerity, and fervency of spirit, through the mediation of Christ, begging those good things that we and others want, deprecating that we and others fear, and giving thanks for that we and others have received.*[2] Prayer is a speaking to God face to face; it is Jacob's ladder by which the soul climbs up to heaven; it is Noah's dove that goes and returns not till it brings assurance of peace.

But not to please you with notions, you must remember that that prayer that accompanies salvation is such prayer as hath in it all the requisites of prayer. Now there are four requisites in prayer.

[1] Ps. xxxi. 15, so Job, so Paul; 2 Tim. i. 12, and iv. 7, 8; Micah vii. 8, 9; Deut. vi. 22.

[2] The matter of prayer may be reduced to these heads: (1.) petition; (2.) deprecation; (3) intercession; (4.) expostulation. There are other distinctions in regard of the

[1.] *The first requisite.* First, *The person must be righteous:* James v. 16, 'The fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much;' John ix. 31, 'God heareth not sinners.' The Jews urge it as a proverb, An unclean person polluteth his own prayers. Good motions from a bad heart make no music in heaven; the sweet words that drop from a leper's lips are but lies in the account of God, Hosea xi. 12.

I have read of a jewel, that, being put in a dead man's mouth, loseth all its virtue. Prayer in the mouth of a wicked man that is dead Godwards, Christ-wards, heaven-wards, and holiness-wards, is a jewel that loseth all its virtue: Ps. l. 16, 17, 'But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant into thy mouth? seeing that thou hatest instruction, and casteth my words behind thee.' Bias, an heathen, being at sea in a great storm, and perceiving many wicked wretches with him in the ship, calling upon the gods, 'Oh,' saith he, 'forbear prayer, hold your tongues; I would not have the gods take notice that you are here; they will sure drown us all, if they should.'[1] You are wise, and know how to apply it.[2]

[2.] *The second requisite.* The second requisite in prayer is this, viz., *The matter of your prayer must be good:* 1 John v. 14, 'And this is the confidence that we have in him, That if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.' The favourites of heaven have no further the ear of the King of kings in prayer, than the matter of their prayer is good, and 'agreeable to his will,' Rom. viii. 27. The matter of your prayer must fall under some particular or general precept or promise, or else God will never own it nor honour it with acceptance. You must not pray as Augustine prayed before his conversion; he prayed for continency, with a proviso: 'Lord, give me continency,' saith he, 'but not yet.'[3] Such hypocrisy is double iniquity, and God will deal with such sinners accordingly.[4]

[3.] *The third requisite.* Thirdly, As the matter of your prayer must be good, so *the manner of your prayer must be right.* God regards not so much the matter as the manner of our prayer.[5] God loves adverbs better than nouns; not to pray only, but to pray well. *Non bonum, sed benè agere,* not to do good, but to do it well.

Now for the better and further clearing of this truth, I shall shew you, by divine assistance, what it is to pray in the right manner, and that I shall do in the following particulars:

First, To pray in a right manner, is *to pray understandingly, to pray knowingly:* 1 Cor. xiv. 15, 'I will pray with understanding.' He that doth not pray understandingly, doth not pray but prate; as that

manner; as, first, mental prayer, which is the inward lifting up of the heart to God; secondly, vocal, which is uttered by words, as the publican, 'God be merciful to me a sinner;' thirdly, there is conceived prayer, and prescribed prayer; fourthly, there is public or private prayer. These hints may suffice as to this.

[1] Diog. Laert, i. 82–88; Plut., *Sol.* iv.—G.

[2] *Quid prodest voce invocare, quem operibus negas?*—Jerome. What availeth it to invocate him with thy voice, whom thou deniest in thy works?

[3] Confessions, b. viii. 27, *et alibi.*—G.

[4] It was both a profane and blasphemous speech of that atheistical wretch, that told God he was no common beggar, he never troubled him before with prayer, and if he would hear him that time, he would never trouble him again.—*Heil. Mic.* p. 376.

[5] Criton.

parrot in Rome that could distinctly say over the whole creed: John iv. 22, 'Ye worship ye know not what,' says Christ. So many pray they know not what. 'Without knowledge the mind cannot be good,' Prov. xix. 2. And can the prayer be good when the mind is bad? A blind mind, a blind sacrifice, a blind priest, are abominable to God.[1] It was a good saying of one, 'God heareth not the words of one that prayeth,' saith he, 'unless he that prayeth heareth them first himself.' And, verily, God will never understand that prayer that we do not understand ourselves.

Secondly, To pray in a right manner, is *to pray believingly*:[2] Heb. xi. 6, 'He that cometh unto God, must believe that he is;' that is, that he is really as good, as gracious, as glorious, as excellent, as constant, &c., as his word reports him to be; and that he is 'a rewarder of them that diligently seek him:' Mark xi. 24, 'Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.' In the Greek it is λαμβάνετε, in the present tense, 'ye do receive them,' to shew the certainty of receiving them. You shall as certainly receive the good things that believingly you ask in prayer, as if you had them already in your hand. God will never let the hand of faith go empty away in prayer. Faith is God's darling, and he never fails to give it a worthy portion, a Benjamin's portion, a Hannah's portion, a double portion: James i. 5–7, 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.' He that prayeth doubtingly, shuts the gates of heaven against his own prayers.[3]

It is reported in the life of Luther, that when he prayed it was *tanta reverentia ut si Deo, et tanta fiducia ut si amico*, with so much reverence, as if he were praying to God; and with so much boldness, as if he had been speaking to his friend. Faith in prayer makes a man divinely familiar and bold with God in prayer. That prayer that hath not the image and stamp of faith upon it, is no prayer in divine account. The sweetest flowers of paradise are only acceptable to God as they are tendered to him by the hand of faith.

Augustus, when a poor man came to present a petition to him with his hand shaking and trembling out of fear, the emperor was much displeased, and said, 'It is not fit that any should come with a petition to a king as if a man were giving meat to an elephant;' that is, afraid to be destroyed by him.

Verily Jehovah loves to see every one of his petitioners to come to him with a stedfast faith, and not with a trembling hand. Christ gets most glory, and the soul gets most good, by those prayers that are accompanied with the actings of faith.

[1] *Ignorat sane improbus omnis*, saith Aristotle, ignorance is the source of all sin, the very well-spring from which all wickedness doth issue.

[2] The philosopher could say, *Qui timide rogat, docet negare*, He that craveth fearfully, draweth on a denial. One of the ancients describes prayer thus: it is, saith he, *Ascensus mentis ad Deum*, a climbing up of the heart to God, which cannot be done but by the power of faith.

[3] Unbelief is virtually all ill; therefore fight especially against it.

Thirdly, To pray in a right manner, is *to pray intensely, fervently, earnestly.* So James v. 16, 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much;' or, as the Greek hath it, 'the working prayer,' that is, such prayer as sets the whole man a-work.[1] The word signifies such a working as notes the liveliest activity that can be. As physic kills the body if it work not, so doth prayer the soul, if it be not working-prayer. As a painted fire is no fire, a dead man no man, so a cold prayer is no prayer. In a painted fire there is no heat; in a dead man there is no life; so in a cold prayer there is no omnipotency, no devotion, no blessing. It is not cold but working prayer that can lock up heaven three years, and open heaven's gate at pleasure, and bring down the sweetest blessings upon our heads, and the choicest favours into our hearts. Cold prayers are as arrows without heads, as swords without edges, as birds without wings: they pierce not, they cut not, they fly not up to heaven. Cold prayers do always freeze before they reach to heaven. So Jacob was earnest in his wrestling with God: 'Let me alone,' says God. 'I will not let thee go except thou bless me,' says Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 24–27. Jacob, though lamed and hard laid at, will not let the Lord go without a blessing. Jacob holds with his hands when his joints were out of joint, and so, as a prince, prevails with God. Jacob prays and weeps, and weeps and prays, and so prevails with God: Hosea xii. 4, 'Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept and made supplication unto him,' &c.[2] It is not the labour of the lips, but the travail of the heart; it is not the pouring forth a flood of words, but the pouring out of the soul, that makes a man a prince, a prevailer with God. A man that would gain victory over God in prayer, must strain every string of his heart; he must, in beseeching God, besiege him, and so get the better of him; he must strive in prayer even to an agony; he must be like importunate beggars, that will not be put off with frowns, or silence, or sad answers. Those that would be masters of their requests, must with the importunate widow press God so far as to put him to the blush; they must with a holy impudence, as Basil speaks, make God ashamed to look them in the face, if he should deny the importunity of their souls.[3] An importunate soul will never cease till he speed; he will devour all discouragements; yea, he will turn discouragements into encouragements, as the woman of Canaan did, till Christ says, 'Be unto thee, O soul, as thou wilt.' As a body without a soul, much wood without fire, a bullet in a gun without powder, so are words in prayer without fervency of spirit. The hottest springs send forth their waters by ebullitions.[4]

I have read of one who, being sensible of his own dulness and coldness in prayer, chid himself thus: 'What! dost thou think that Jonah prayed thus when he was in the belly of hell? or Daniel, when he was

[1] *ἐνεργουμένη.* Faith is an omnipotent grace. It works wonders in heaven, in the heart, and in the earth. Such working prayer as sets all the faculties of the soul, and all the graces in the soul, at work, always speeds; it fails not of winning the day, of carrying the crown.

[2] The Jews have a saying, that since the destruction of Jerusalem, the door of prayers hath been shut; but the door of tears was never shut, saith one.

[3] Rom. xv. 30, *συναγωνίσασθαί.* The word signifies to strive to the shedding of blood. Luke xviii. 5, *ὑπωπιάζῃ,* buffet me, or beat me down with her blows, as wrestlers beat down their adversaries with their fists or clubs.

[4] *Oratio brevis penetrat cœlum,* saith one.

in the lions' den? or the thief, when he was upon the cross? and I may add, or the three children, when they were in the fiery furnace? or the apostles, when they were in bonds and prisons. Oh! that Christians would chide themselves out of their cold prayers, and chide themselves into a better and a warmer frame of spirit when they make their supplications before the Lord. An importunate soul in prayer is like the poor beggar that prays and knocks, that prays and waits, that prays and works, that knocks and knits, that begs and patches, and will not stir from the door till he hath an alms.[1] And verily he that is good at this will not be long a beggar in grace. God will make his heart and his cup to overflow.

Fourthly, To pray in a right manner, is, *to pray assiduously, constantly, as well as fervently.* Luke xviii. 1, 'And he spake a parable unto them, to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;' or as it is in the Greek, not to 'shrink back,' as sluggards in work or cowards in war.'[2] Now men pray always, first, when their hearts are always prepared to pray, or in a praying frame; secondly, when they do not omit the duty, when it is to be performed, or when they take hold on every opportunity, to pour out their souls before the Lord. 1 Thes. v. 17, 'Pray without ceasing.' A man must always pray habitually, though not actually; he must have his heart in a praying disposition in all estates and conditions, in prosperity and adversity, in health and sickness, in strength and weakness, in wealth and wants, in life and death.[3] So in Eph. vi. 18, 'Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints. Our daily weaknesses, our daily wants, our daily fears, our daily dangers, our daily temptations, &c., bespeak our daily prayers. Rom. xii. 12, 'Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulations, continuing instant in prayer,' προσκαρτεροῦντες. It is a metaphor taken from dogs that hunt, that will not give over the game till they have got it. A dog, of all creatures, is best able to endure hunger; he will run from place to place, and never leave it till he hath got his prey. So a child of God in his hunting after God, Christ, grace, peace, mercy, glory, never gives over till he hath found his heavenly prey. Cant. iii. 4, 'At length I found him whom my soul loved; I held him, and would not let him go.' The spouse never left hunting after her beloved, till she had found him.[4] Gracious souls reckon that they have nothing till they speed in the things they sue for; they pray as if they had never prayed, and think that they have done nothing till they have done the deed.[5] It is observed by some of Proteus, that he was wont to give certain oracles; but it was hard to make him speak and deliver them, but he

[1] The Jews write upon the walls of their synagogues this sentence, that prayer, without the intention of the mind, is but as a body without a soul. You know how to apply it. Jerome speaks of certain holy women in his time, that they seemed in their fervent affections to join with the holy company of heaven.

[2] ἐγκακεῖν, *i. e. Non defatigari.*—Cornelius à Lapide. To pray always is ἐν παντὶ καίρῳ, to pray in every opportunity.

[3] *Semper orat qui benè semper agit.* To pray always, is to pray *omni tempore.* Prayer, saith one, is *Flagellum diaboli.*

[4] Augustine's usual wish was, that when Christ came, he might find him *Aut precantem, aut prædicantem*, either praying or preaching.

[5] As a hungry man eats as if he had never ate before.

would turn himself into several shapes and forms; yet if they would hold out and press him hard without fear, into whatsoever form or shape he appeared, they were sure to have satisfactory oracles. So if we will continue constant in our wrestling with God for blessings, though God should appear unto us in the form or shape of a judge, an enemy, a stranger, &c., yet still to press him hard for mercy, verily mercy will come at the long run, and we shall say, that it is not in vain for men to hold on praying, though God for a time delays giving the particular favours they sue for. As that emperor said, *Oportet imperatorem stantem mori*, it behoves an emperor to die standing, so may I say, *Oportet Christianum mori precantem*, it behoves a Christian to die praying.[1]

Fifthly, To pray in a right manner, is *to pray sincerely:* Ps. xvii. 1, 'Give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips'; or, as it is in the Hebrew, without 'lips of deceit.'[2] Ps. cxlv. 18, 'The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him: to all that call upon him in truth.' Your heart and tongue must go together; word and work, lip and life, prayer and practice must echo one to another, or all will be lost, heaven lost, and the soul lost for ever. It is not the greatness of the voice, nor the multitude of words, nor the sweetness of the tone, nor studied notions, nor eloquent expressions, that takes Jehovah, but truth in the inward parts, Ps. li. 6. When the Athenians would know of the oracle, the cause of their often unprosperous successes in battle against the Lacedæmonians, seeing they offered the choicest things they could get, in sacrifice to the gods, which their enemies did not, the oracle gave them this answer, That the gods were better pleased with their inward supplication without ambition, than with all their outward pomp in costly sacrifices. Ah, souls! the reason why you are so unsuccessful in your religious duties and services is, because you are no more sincere and upright in them. Were there more singleness and sincerity of heart in your duties, you would have surer and sweeter returns from heaven.[3]

One reports of Joachim,[4] the father of the Virgin Mary, that he would often say, *Cibus et potus mihi erit oratio*, prayer is my meat and drink. Ah, Christians! the more sincere you are, the more will prayer be your meat and drink; and the more prayer is a delight and pleasure to you, the more will you be the pleasure and delight of God, who delights in those that delight in his service, and that count his work better than wages. It was more troublesome to Severus the emperor, to be asked nothing, than to give much; when any of his courtiers had not made bold with him, he would call him and say, *Quid est cur nihil petis? &c.*, what meanest thou to ask me nothing? So says Christ to upright souls; 'Hitherto have ye asked nothing; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full,' John xvi. 24. Christ hath a full purse, a noble heart, and a liberal hand.

[1] Hypocrites are inconstant in their prayers; they are only at it by fits and starts, they are only constant in inconstancy.

[2] בלא שפתי מרמה. The very heathen gods would be served in white, the very emblem of purity.

[3] A gentlewoman, being in her parlour in meditation and prayer, cried out, Oh that I might ever enjoy this sweet communion with God, and never change it! The first part of her wish is precious; in the latter part of the wish, like Peter, she said she knew not what.

[4] *Protei. Jac.* i., &c.—G.

[4.] *The fourth requisite* in prayer is this, viz., your prayer must be *ad bonum, to a good end;* it must be to the glory of God, and to the internal and eternal advantage of your own and others' souls.[1] The chiefest end, the white, the mark, at which the soul must aim in prayer, is God's glory: 'Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God,' 1 Cor. x. 31. When God crowns us, he doth but crown his own gifts in us; and when we give God the glory of all we do, we do but give him the glory that is due unto his name; for he works all our works in us and for us. God measures all men's actions by their ends: if their end be good, all is good; if the end be naught, all is naught. The end determineth the action. All actions of worship are good or bad, as the mark is at which the soul aims. He that makes God the object of prayer, but not the end of prayer, doth but lose his prayer, and take pains to undo himself. God will be all in all, or he will be nothing at all; he will be *Alexander* or *Nemo;* he will be both the object and the end of prayer, or else he will abhor your prayer. Those prayers never reach his ear, they are never lodged in his bosom, that are not directed to his glory. The end must always be as noble as the means, or else a Christian acts below himself, yea, below his very reason.

Ah, Christians! it is not a flood of words, nor high strains of wit, nor vehemency of affections in prayer, but holy and gracious ends, that will render prayer acceptable and honourable to God, comfortable and profitable to yourselves and others; yea, the directing of one prayer to divine glory doth more torture and torment Satan than all the prayers in the world that are directed to ends below divine glory. It is not simply prayer, but the soul's aiming at divine glory in prayer, that adds to Christ's crown and Satan's hell.[2]

And thus I have shewed you all the requisites of prayer, even of such prayer as accompanies salvation. I shall now proceed to some other particulars for the further and fuller opening of this truth.

(2.) *The second property.* Secondly, That prayer that accompanies salvation *betters the whole man.* By it faith is increased, hope strengthened, the spirit exhilarated, the heart pacified, the conscience purified, temptations vanquished, corruptions weakened, the affections inflamed, the will more renewed, and the whole man more advantaged. Prayer is a spiritual chair, wherein the soul sitteth down at the feet of the Lord, to receive the influences of his grace. Prayer is the regal gate by which the Lord entereth into the heart, comforting, quieting, strengthening, quickening, and raising of it. The Scripture affords us a cloud of witnesses to prove this truth, but I appeal to praying saints. Ah, tell me, tell me, praying souls, have not you, do not you find it so? I know you have and do, and that is it that makes prayer a pleasure, a paradise unto you.[3]

[1] Maximilian's motto was, *Tene mensuram, et respice finem*, keep thyself within compass, and have always an eye to the end of thy life and actions.

[2] Lord, saith Austin, whatever thou hast given, take all away; only give me thyself, Isa. i. 11; Zech. vii. 5; Amos v. 22; Hosea vii. 14. Many heathens, as Aristides, Cato, Themistocles, with divers others, did unfeignedly many great services for the common good, and not for their own gain; but yet they could not hit the mark, the white, divine glory; and so their most glorious actions were but glorious sins, and would never turn to their souls' accounts.

[3] It was a sweet saying of one, 'O Lord! I never come to thee but by thee; I never go from thee without thee.' [Ambrose, Epist. 116.—G.]

(3.) *The third property.* Thirdly, You may judge what prayer that is that accompanies salvation *by considering the difference that is betwixt the prayers of the godly and the wicked.* Now the difference between the prayers of the one and the other I shall shew you in the following particulars.

The first difference. First, *Gracious souls do trade and deal with God in prayer, only upon the account and credit of Christ.*[1] They beg mercy to pardon them, and grace to purge them, and balm to heal them, and divine favour to comfort them, and power to support them, and wisdom to counsel them, and goodness to satisfy them, but all upon the account of Christ's blood, of Christ's righteousness, of Christ's satisfaction, and of Christ's intercession at the right hand of the Father, Rev. iv. 10, 11. They seek the Father in the Son, they present their suits always in Christ's name, for so is the will of Christ: John xiv. 13, 14, 'And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.' John xv. 16, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he will give it you.' Chap. xvi. 23, 'Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.' ὅτι ὅσα ἂν αἰτήσητε. The Greek is pregnant, and may be read not only 'Whatsoever,' but also 'How many things soever ye shall ask or beg of the Father in my name, he will give them to you.' There is no admission into heaven, except we bring Christ in our arms: Eph. ii. 18, 'For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.' The Greek word signifies 'a leading by the hand.' It is an allusion to the custom of princes, to whom there is no passage, unless we be brought in by one of the favourites.[2]

Plutarch reports, 'That it was wont to be the way of some of the heathens, the Molossians, when they would seek the favour of their prince, they took up the king's son in their arms, and so went and kneeled before the king.[3]

Ah, Christians! Christ is near and dear unto the Father; the Father hath determined to give out all his loves and favours through his Son; if you bring Christ in the arms of your faith, you gain the Father's heart, and in gaining his heart you gain all. The father's mercies melt, his bowels roll, his heart turns, his compassions are kindled upon the sight of his Son's merits and mediation. As Joseph said to his brethren, 'Ye shall not see my face unless you bring your brother Benjamin,' so says God, you shall not see my face unless you bring the Lord Jesus with you.[4]

Now gracious souls, in all their prayers, they present Jesus Christ before the Father, and upon his account they desire those things that make for their external, internal, and eternal good. Ah! but vain men

[1] It is a notable saying Luther hath upon the 130th Psalm: Often and willingly, saith he, do I inculcate this, that you should shut your eyes and your ears, and say, You know no God out of Christ, none but he that was in the lap of Mary, and sucked her breasts. He means none out of him.

[2] προσαγωγὴν. As no access, so no acceptance without Christ, Eph. i. 6, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. [3] Plutarch: *Pyrrh.*, i. 5, &c.—G.

[4] As Joseph said, 'See not my face, except you bring Benjamin with you,' so says God, See not my face, except you bring Jesus with you, Gen. xlii. 20–34; and as David said to Abner, 2 Sam. iii. 13.

treat and trade with God in prayer upon the account of their own worth, righteousness, worthiness, and services: Isa. lviii. 2, 3, 'Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God. They ask of me the ordinances of justice, they take delight in approaching to me: Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our souls, and thou takest no knowledge?' Here you see they stand upon their own practices and services, and expostulate the case with God in an angry manner, because God did not answer their hypocritical performances. So the proud pharisee stands in prayer upon his own worthiness and righteousness: Luke xviii. 11, 12, 'The pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.'[1] So did those hypocrites in Mat. vi. 23 stand very much upon their outward services and performances, though they were but shining sins, but filthy rags.

The second difference. Secondly, Souls truly gracious pray more *to get off their sins than they do to get off their chains.* Though bonds did attend Paul in every place, Acts xx. 23, as himself speaks, yet he never cries out, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from my bonds, but, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from my sins, from this body of death?' Rom. vii. 23. David cries not *Perii,* but *Peccavi;* not I am undone, but I have done foolishly, Ps. li. 4. But wicked men strive in prayer more to get off their chains than to get off their sins; more to be delivered from enemies without than lusts within; more to get out of the furnace than to be delivered from their spiritual bondage, as the scriptures in the margin do evidence.[2]

The third difference. Thirdly, The stream and cream of a gracious man's spirit runs most out in prayer after spiritual and heavenly things, as is abundantly evident by those prayers of the saints that are upon record throughout the Scripture, Ps. iv. 6, 7, and xxvii. 4; but the stream and cream of vain men's spirits in prayer runs most out after poor, low, carnal things, as you may see in comparing the following scriptures together, Hosea vii. 14, Zech. vii. 5–7, James iv. 3, &c.

The fourth difference. Fourthly, A gracious soul *looks and lives more upon God in prayer than upon his prayer.* He knows, though prayer be his chariot, yet Christ is his food. Prayer may be a staff to support him, but Christ is that manna that must nourish him, and upon him he looks, and lives: Ps. v. 3, 'In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee' (or marshal and set in order my prayer, as it is in the Hebrew), 'and will look up' (or 'look out,' as it is in the Hebrew) 'as a watchman looks out to discover the approaches of an enemy.'[3] But vain men, they live and look more upon their prayers than they do upon God; nay, usually they never observe what returns they have from heaven. They are like those that shoot arrows, but do not mind where they fall. Wicked men think it is religion enough for them to pray; and to look after their prayers, to see how their prayers speed, is no

[1] This pharisee was like the Egyptian temple, painted without, and spotted within; varnish without, and vermin within.

[2] Ps. lxxviii. 34; Zech. vii. 5–7; Isa. xxvi. 16, 17.

[3] אערך לך ואצפה, in Pihil.

article of their faith; but a gracious soul is of a more noble spirit; when he hath prayed he will stand upon his watch-tower, and observe what God will speak: Ps. lxxxv. 8, 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak;'[1] for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not return to folly;' or, as the Hebrew may be read, 'And they shall not return to folly, *Veal iashubu le chislah.*' Wicked men would have God to be all ear to hear what they desire, when themselves have never an ear to hear what he speaks. But deaf ears shall always be attended with dumb answers. Justice always makes mercy dumb, when sin hath made the sinner deaf.

The fifth difference. Fifthly, No discouragements can take gracious souls off from prayer, but the least discouragments will take off carnal hearts from prayer, as you may see in the following scriptures compared together: Ps. xl. 1, 2, and xliv. 10–23; Mat. xv. 21–29; Mal. iii. 14; Isa. lviii. 1–3; Amos viii. 3–5, &c.[2]

When one of the ancient martyrs was terrified with the threatenings of his persecutors, he replied, 'There is nothing,' saith he, 'of things visible, nothing of things invisible that I fear; I will stand to my profession of the name of Christ, and contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, come on it what will.' It is neither the hope of life, nor the fear of death, that can take a real Christian off from prayer. He is rather raised than dejected, he is rather quickened than discouraged by delays or denials; he will hold up and hold on in a way and course of prayer, though men should rage and lions roar, and the furnace be heat seven times hotter, &c. But it is not so with carnal hearts, Job xxvii. 9, 10.

The sixth difference. Sixthly, When a gracious man prays, he hath his heart in his prayer; when he falls upon the work, he makes heart-work of it.[3] So David, Ps. xlii. 4, 'When I remember these things, I pour out my heart.' So Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 15, 'I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit,' said she, 'and have poured out my soul before the Lord.' So the Israelites in 1 Sam. vii. 6, 'pour out their souls like water before the Lord.' So the church in Isa. xxvi. 8, 9, 'The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early.' Gracious souls know that no prayer is acknowledged, accepted, and rewarded by God, but that wherein the heart is sincerely and wholly.[4] It is not a piece, it is not a corner of the heart, that will satisfy the maker of the heart. The true mother would not have the child divided. As God loves a broken and a contrite heart, so he loathes a divided heart. God neither loves halting nor halving, he will be served truly and totally. The royal law is, 'Thou shalt love and serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul,' Deut. x. 12. Among the heathens, when the beasts were cut up for

[1] אֵישׁ כִּוָּעָה, I will listen, and lay my obedient ear to what the Lord shall speak.

[2] Aristotle, though a heathen, could say, that in some cases a man had better lose his life than be cowardly.—*Ethic.* iii. cap. i.

[3] In his course his heart is in his prayer; he finds by experience that the heart is the *primum mobile*, the great wheel that moves all other wheels. It is the chief monarch in the isle of man.

[4] The voice of God is *Da mihi cor.* The heart, as a prince, gives laws to all other members. The heart is Christ's bed of spices; it is his presence-chamber; it is his royal throne; it is one of those four keys that God keeps under his own girdle.

sacrifice, the first thing the priest looked upon was the heart, and if the heart was naught the sacrifice was rejected. Verily, God rejects all those sacrifices wherein the heart is not.

Now wicked men are heartless in all their services, in all their prayers, as you may see in comparing the following scriptures together; I shall not transcribe the words, because I must cut short the work: Isa. xxix. 13; Mat. xv. 7–9; Ezek. xxxiii. 30–32; Zech. vii. 4–6; 2 Chron. xxv. 1, 2. As the body without the soul is dead, so prayer, without the heart be in it, is but dead prayer in the eye and account of God.[1] Prayer is only lovely and weighty, as the heart is in it, and no otherwise. It is not the lifting up of the voice, nor the wringing of the hands, nor the beating of the breasts, but the stirrings of the heart, that God looks at in prayer. God hears no more than the heart speaks; if the heart be dumb, God will certainly be deaf. No prayer takes with God but that which is the travail of the heart.

The seventh difference. Seventhly, Gracious souls usually come off from prayer, with hearts more disengaged from sin, and more vehemently set against it.[2] The precious communion that they have with God in prayer, the sweet breathings of God into their hearts, whilst they are a-breathing out their requests in his ears, and the secret assistance, stirrings, and movings of the Spirit upon their souls in prayer, arm them more against sin, and makes them stand upon the highest terms of defiance with sin. How shall I do this or that wickedness against God? says the praying soul, Oh I cannot, I will not do anything unworthy of him that hath caused his glory to pass before me in prayer.

Ah! but wicked men come off from prayer with hearts more encouraged to sin, and more resolved to walk in ways of sin: Prov. vii. 14–24, 'I have peace-offerings with me,' saith the harlot; 'this day have I paid my vows: therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning; let us solace ourselves with loves.'[3] So in Jer. vii. 9, 10, 'Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?' Wicked men are like Lewis, king of France, that would swear and then kiss the cross, and then swear more bitterly and then kiss the cross. So they sin and pray, and pray and sin; and the more they pray, the more easily, resolutely, impudently do they sin.[4] They make use of prayer to charm their consciences, that so they may sin with more pleasure and less regret. Ah! what pains do such sinners take to go to hell, and to arm their consciences against themselves in that day, wherein they shall say, There is no help, there is no hope!

The eighth difference. Eighthly and lastly, *Gracious souls do more*

[1] Prayer without the heart is but an empty ring, a tinkling cymbal.

[2] Dan. ix. 9, Neh. x., compared; Rom. viii. 26, *συναντιλαμβάνεται*, helpeth together, or helps us as the nurse doth the little child. Prayer is the breath of the Spirit, &c.

[3] נרוה דדים, be drunken with loves, which shews her unsatiable lusts.

[4] Mr [Thomas] Shepherd, in his 'Sincere Convert,' speaks of such a monster: yea, this age is full of such monsters, that have no pity upon themselves. [Shepherd's 'Works' have been collected in 3 vols. crown 8vo (1853), in America. The 'Sincere Convert' is still a favourite,—G.]

eye and observe how their own hearts are wrought upon in prayer, than how others' hearts are wrought upon.[1] When they pray, they look with a curious eye upon their own spirits, they look with a narrow eye upon their own hearts, and observe how they are affected, melted, humbled, quickened, raised, spiritualized, and bettered by prayer. But vain men, as they pray to 'be seen of men,' so they eye most how others like their prayers, and are affected and taken with their prayers. They are most critical in observing what operations their prayers have upon others' hearts, but never mind, to any purpose, how they operate upon their own hearts; a worse plague cannot befall them.[2]

And thus I have endeavoured to shew you what a wide difference there is betwixt the prayers of the godly and the ungodly; and by this, as by the former particulars laid down, you may see what prayer that is that accompanies salvation.

Now, in the seventh place, I shall shew you what perseverance that is that accompanies salvation, and that I shall do in these following particulars.

(1.) *The first property.* First, That perseverance that accompanies salvation, is *Perseverance in a holy profession.* Heb. iv. 14, 'Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession by a strong hand,' or by a hand of holy violence [κρατῶμεν]. So in chap. x. 23, 'Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering' (or as it is in the Greek, 'without tilting, or tossing to one side or other'), 'for he is faithful that promised.'[3] Therefore let no temptation, affliction, opposition, or persecution, take us off from our holy profession, but let us hold our profession with a forcible hand, yea, with both hands, in the face of all difficulties, dangers, and deaths, as Cynægirus, the Athenian captain, did the ship that was laden with the rich spoil of his country.[4]

(2.) *The second property.* Secondly, That perseverance that accompanies salvation, is *a perseverance in holy and spiritual principles.* It is an abiding in love, John xv. 9, 10; and an abiding in faith and hope, 1 Cor. xiii. 13, &c. Perseverance is not a particular distinct grace of itself; but such a virtue as crowns all virtue; it is such a grace as casts a general glory and beauty upon every grace, it is a grace that leads every grace on to perfection.[5]

To persevere in holy and heavenly principles, is to persevere in believing, in repenting, in mourning, in hoping; it is to persevere in love, in fear, in humility, in patience, in self-denial, &c. Now it is this perseverance in holy and gracious principles that accompanies salvation, that leads to salvation.[6] No grace, no, not the most sparkling and shining grace, can bring a man to heaven of itself, without perseverance; not faith, which is the champion of grace, if it faint and fail; not love, which is the nurse of grace, if it decline and wax cold; not

[1] Ps. xxxv. 13, my prayer returned into my own bosom, Isa. xxvi. 8, 9.

[2] Mat. vi. 23. The virtue of some lieth in the spectator's eyes.

[3] κατέχωμεν signifies a forcible holding, a holding with both hands, Ἀκλινῆ.

[4] Justin, ii. 9, &c.—G.

[5] So Col. i. 23; 1 Tim. iv. 15; Heb. xiii. 1, and xi. 13. These all died in faith, or as it is in the Greek, they all died according to faith, that is, persevering in faith.

[6] It is a rule in the civil law, *Nec videtur actum si quid supersit quod agatur*, that nothing seems to be done if there remain aught to be done. Let a man do never so much, if he do not persevere, he will be found to have done nothing.

humility, which is the adorner and beautifier of grace, if it continue not to the end; not obedience, not repentance, not patience, nor no other grace, except they have their perfect work. It is perseverance in grace that crowns every grace, and every gracious soul with a crown of glory at last. Rev. ii. 10, 'Be thou faithful to the death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' Such as only believe for a time, and repent for a time, and love for a time, and rejoice for a time, and hope for a time, as all hypocrites only do &c., but do not persevere and hold out, will be doubly miserable in the day of vengeance. Perseverance is the accomplishment of every grace; without it, he that fights cannot hope to overcome; and he that for the present doth overcome, cannot look for the crown, unless he still perseveres and goes on conquering and to conquer, till he finds all his enemies slain before him.

(3.) *The third property.* Thirdly, That perseverance that accompanies salvation is *an abiding or continuing in the word or doctrine of Christ.*[1] John xv. 7, 'If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.' 1 John ii. 14, 'I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you.' Ver. 24, 'Let that therefore abide in you which you have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.' 2 John 9, 'Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.' None shall receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls, but those that hold fast the doctrine of faith, soundly, sincerely, and entirely to the end: John viii. 31, 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.' It is the end that crowns the action, as the evening crowns the day, as the last act commends the whole scene. It is not enough to begin well except we end well; the beginning of Christians is not so considerable as the end.[2] Manasseh and Paul began ill, but ended well; Judas and Demas began well, but ended ill.'[3] It is not the knowledge of the doctrine of Christ, nor the commending of the word of Christ, but the abiding in Christ's word, the continuing in Christ's doctrine, that accompanies life and glory, and that will render a man happy at last. Such that, with Hymeneus and Alexander, put away, or make shipwreck of the doctrine of faith, of the word of faith, shall, by the Lord or his people, or by both, be delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme, 1 Tim. i. 19, 20, 1 Cor. v. 5. Usually the end of such is worse than the beginning. Double damnation attends those that begin in the spirit and end in the flesh, 2 Peter ii. 20–22; 2 Tim. iii. 13.

(4.) *The fourth property.* Fourthly, and lastly, That perseverance that accompanies salvation is a perseverance *in holy and gracious actions and motions; it is a continuing in pious duties and religious services,* Philip. iii. 10–14; Isa. xl. 31. The life of a Christian con-

[1] You must persevere, and hold fast the faith of the gospel, without wavering in it or starting from it. You must be as the centre, or as mount Zion, stedfast and unmoveable.

[2] The tabernacle was covered over with red—and the purple-feathers* tell us that they take that habit for the same intent—to note, that we must defend the truth, and abide by the truth, even to effusion of blood. * I suppose, the Romish priests.—ED.

[3] Nero's first five years were famous, but afterwards who more cruel?

sists in motion, not in session.[1] A Christian's emblem should be an house moving towards heaven; he must never stand still, he must always be a-going on from faith to faith, and from strength to strength.[2] When saints have done their work in this life, they shall sit upon thrones in a better life. Perseverance is a going on, a holding out in ways of piety and sanctity:[3] Acts i. 14, 'These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication. Chap. ii. 42, 'And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer.' Ver. 46, 'And they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.' 1 Tim. v. 5, 'Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.' Rom. xii. 12, 'Continuing instant in prayer.' Christians must work hard in a wilderness before they sit down in paradise. They must make a constant progress in holiness before they enter into happiness. It is the excellency of perseverance, that it keeps a Christian still in motion God-wards, heaven-wards, holiness-wards. It is a grace that quickens a man to motion, to action; it keeps a man still going, still doing. And motion is the excellency of the creature; and the more excellent any creature is, the more excellent is that creature in its motions, as you may see in the motions of the celestial bodies, the sun, moon, and stars. Perseverance is a perpetual motion in ways of grace and holiness, Ps. xliv. 16–20.[4] Perseverance will make a man hold up and hold on in the work and ways of the Lord, in the face of all impediments, discouragements, temptations, tribulations, and persecutions. As the moon holds on her motion though the dogs bark, so perseverance will make a Christian hold on in his holy and heavenly motions though vain men bark and bite, &c.

And thus I have shewed you what perseverance that is that accompanies salvation.

Now in the eighth place I shall shew very briefly,

(1.) That hope doth accompany salvation.

(2.) What that hope is that doth accompany salvation.[5]

1. *That hope doth accompany salvation, these scriptures speak it out:* Rom. viii. 24, 'For we are saved by hope;' Gal. v. 5, 'For we though the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith;' Eph. i. 18, 'The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints;' 1 Thes. v. 8, 'But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation;' Titus. iii. 7, 'That, being justified

[1] 'Sitting.'—G. [2] *Non progredi est regredi*, not to go forwards is to go backwards.

[3] Acts xiii. 43, and xiv. 22. προσκαρτεροῦντες of καρτερεῖν, signifying a continuance in prayer and supplication, with an invincible and strong constancy.

[4] There was a temple of Concord among the heathens; and shall it not be found among Christians, that are the temple of the Holy Ghost?

[5] The eighth and last thing that accompanies salvation is hope. I shall gather up what I have to say concerning hope into as narrow a compass as I can, being unwilling to tire the reader's patience, and my own spirits. The philosophers excluded hope out of their catalogues of virtues, numbering it among the perturbations. But God by his word hath taught us better.

by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life;' Chap. i. 2 'In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.'

By all these scriptures it doth fully appear, that hope doth accompany salvation, it doth border upon eternal life.

2. The second thing that I am to shew you is, *what hope that is that doth accompany salvation*, that comprehends salvation; and that I shall do with as much brevity and perspicuity as I can, in the following particulars:

First, That hope that accompanies salvation *is a grace of God whereby we expect good to come, waiting patiently till it come.*[1]

(1.) I call it a grace of God, because he is the *donor of it;* and therefore he is called the God of hope: Rom. xv. 13, 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.' Now God is called the God of hope, because he is *objectivè*, the only object of our hope, and he is *effectivè*, the only author and worker of hope in the soul. Hope is no natural affection in men. Men are not born with hope in their hearts, as they are born with tongues in their mouths. Hope is nobly descended, it is from above, it is a heavenly babe that is formed in the soul of man by the power of the Holy Ghost. And as hope is no natural affection, so hope is no moral virtue, which men may attain by their frequent actions; but hope is the theological virtue that none can give but God.

(2.) I say it is a grace of God, whereby we expect *good* to come; I say good, not evil, for evil is rather feared than hoped for by any.

The object of this hope hath four conditions:

1. It must be *bonum*, good.
2. *Futurum*, future.
3. *Possibile*, possible.
4. *Arduum*, hard or difficult to obtain.

(3.) I say hope is a grace of God, whereby we expect good *to come*, patiently waiting till it come. Hope makes the soul quiet and patient till it comes to possess the good desired and hoped for: Rom. viii. 25, 'But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.' The Hebrew word *kavah*, that is often translated hope, signifies a very vehement intention, both of body and mind, a stretching forth of the spirit or mind, in waiting for a desired good.

2. Secondly, That hope that accompanies salvation *is always conversant about holy and heavenly objects*, as about God and Christ:[2] 1 Tim. i. 1, 'Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope.' In these words, Christ is set forth as the chief object of our hope, because by his merits and mercy, we hope to obtain the remission of our sins, and the eternal

[1] *Spes est expectatio eorum quæ verè à Deo promissa fides credidit.*—Calvin. 1 Tim. vi. 17. This very title, 'the God of hope,' may serve as a sovereign antidote against the blackest and horridest temptations; for why should any despair of his mercy, who hath proclaimed himself to be the God of hope? *Spes est virtus qua inclinamur ad expectationem eorum quæ Deus nobis promisit.*—Perkins.

[2] 2 Cor. iv. 18. Hope fares well; it keeps a prince's table; it lives upon honey and milk, oil and wine; it lives upon the sweatmeats, the delicates of heaven, as God, Christ and glory, Ps. xxxi. 24, xxxiii. 22, xxxviii. 15, xlii. 5, xliii. 5, xxxix. 7, lxxi. 5, and xv. 5.

salvation of our souls. Sometimes hope is exercised about the righteousness of Christ: Gal. v. 5, 'For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.' Sometimes hope is exercised about God the Father: 1 Peter i. 21, 'Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God;' Jer. xiv. 8, 'Oh the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble;' Chap. xvii. 13, 'O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed;' ver. 17, 'Thou art my hope in the day of evil.' Sometimes hope is exercised and busied about the word and promises: Ps. cxix. 49, 'Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope;' ver. 81, 'My soul fainteth for thy salvation; but I hope in thy word;' ver. 114, 'Thou art my hiding-place, and my shield: I hope in thy word;' Ps. cxxx. 5, 'I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope;' Ps. cxix. 74, 'They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word;' ver. 147, 'I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word.' Hope in the promise will keep the head from aching, and the heart from breaking; it will keep both head and heart from sinking and drowning. Hope exercised upon the promise, brings heaven down to the heart.[1] The promises are the ladder by which hope gets up to heaven. Hope in the promise will not only keep life and soul together, but will also keep the soul and glory together; hope in the promise will support distressed souls; hope in the promise will settle perplexed souls; hope in the promise will comfort dejected souls; hope in the promise will reduce wandering souls; hope in the promise will confirm staggering souls; hope in the promise will save undone souls.[2] The promise is the same to hope, that hope is to the soul; the promise is the anchor of hope, as hope is the anchor of the soul. Look, what the breasts are to the child, and oil is to the lamp, that are the promises to hope, Rom. viii. 24.[3] Hope lives and thrives, as it feeds upon the promises, as it embraces the promises. The promises are the sweetmeats of heaven, upon which hope lives. And every degree of hope brings a degree of joy into the soul, which makes it cry out, Heaven, heaven, Heb. xi. 13; Ps. xvi. 11; Tit. iii. 7.

Again, hope is exercised about the glory and felicity, the happiness and blessedness that is at God's right hand. Titus ii. 13, 'Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.'[4] Hope makes a man stretch out his neck and put forth his hand, and look as earnestly for the glorious appearing of Christ, as Sisera's mother did for the happy return of her son. The hoping soul is often a-sighing it out, Why are his chariot wheels so long a-coming? Col. i. 5, 'For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven.' Hope in this place is taken by a metonymy, for the things hoped for, viz., all that glory and felicity, that blessedness and happiness, that is

[1] The Jewish Rabbins were wont to say, that upon every letter of the law there hangs mountains of profitable matter. Ah! then, what abundance of comfort and sweetness may hope find, yea, does hope find in the promises.

[2] Ps. xlii. 5, and cxix. 49, 50, compared, Hosea vi. 1, 2.

[3] The promises are hope's rich magazine.

[4] προσδεχόμενοι. Looking for Christ's coming as earnestly as men look and long for the coming of some special friends, or as innkeepers do for special guests.

laid up for us in heaven.[1] So in Heb. vi. 18, 'Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.' Hope here is put for the object of hope, viz., heaven and happiness. Hope lays such fast hold, as the Greek word here signifies, κρατῆσαι, upon heaven and happiness, that none shall ever be able to take those precious things out of hope's hand. So hope is put for the glorious things hoped for, Eph. i. 18. And thus you see those precious and glorious objects, about which that hope that accompanies salvation is exercised.

3. Thirdly, That hope that accompanies salvation, that comprehends salvation, that borders upon salvation, *is grounded upon the firmest foundations, to wit, the promises of God,* Prov. x. 28, as hath been fully shewed before; and it is built upon the free grace of God, 1 Peter i. 13. It is built upon the infinite and glorious power of God, Rom. iv. 21. It is built upon the truth and faithfulness of God, 2 Tim. ii. 13. These precious and glorious foundations do bear up the hopes of the saints, as the three pillars bore up the hangings in the tabernacle. A believer's hope is founded upon the love of Christ, the blood of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the satisfaction of Christ, and the intercession of Christ, &c; but the hopes of hypocrites and wicked men, are always built upon weak, slender, and sandy foundations. Sometimes they build their hopes upon their outward profession, upon their lamps, though they are empty lamps, Mat. xxv. 3; and sometimes upon their duties and services, as the Jews, scribes, and Pharisees did, Isa. lviii, 1–3, Mat. vi. 1, 2, &c; and sometimes upon their outward privileges, crying out, 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord;' and sometimes they build their hopes upon others' good opinion of them, and sometimes upon flashes of joy, and sometimes upon enlargements in duties, and sometimes upon the heat and vigour of their spirits in religious services, &c.[2] And all these are but sandy foundations, and they that build their hope upon them will certainly fall, and great will be their fall. The hopes of the saints are built upon the surest and the strongest foundations. It was a good saying of one of the ancients, 'I consider,' said he, 'three things in which all my hope consisteth, to wit, 1, God's love in my adoption; 2, the truth of his promise; and 3, his power of performance. Therefore, let my foolish cogitation murmur as long as it list, saying, Who art thou? or, What is that glory? or, By what merits dost thou hope to attain it? For I can answer with sure confidence, I know on whom I have believed, 2 Tim. i. 12. And I am certain, first, that in his love he adopted me; secondly, that he is true in his promise; and thirdly, that he is able to perform it. This is the threefold cord which is not easily broken.'[3]

4. Fourthly, That hope that accompanies salvation, that borders upon salvation, that comprehends salvation, that brings salvation, may be known from all false hopes, *by the excellent properties of it,* and they are these that follow.

[1.] *The first property* of that hope that accompanies salvation is this: *it elevates and raises the heart to live above, where its treasure is.*[4] This hope is from above, and it makes the heart to live above: it

[1] So in Rom. viii. 24, 25; Col. i. 27; Rom. v. 2, &c.

[2] Every false principle in religion is 'a reed of Egypt,' that will certainly deceive souls at last; therefore take heed of leaning upon any of those reeds.

[3] Bernard, serm. 3, *de fragm*: *Sept. Miser.*

[4] Mat. vi. 20, 21; Philip. iii. 20; Col. iii. 1. Mark, wicked men's hopes never raise

is a spark of glory, and it leads the heart to live in glory. Divine hope carries a man to heaven, for life to quicken him, and for wisdom to direct him, and for power to uphold him, and for righteousness to justify him, and for holiness to sanctify him, and for mercy to forgive him, and for assurance to rejoice him, and for happiness to crown him. Divine hope takes in the pleasures of heaven beforehand; it lives in the joyful expectation of them; it fancies to itself, as I may say, the pleasures and joys of eternity; and lives in a sweet anticipation of what it possesseth by faith. Hope's richest treasures, and choicest friends, and chiefest delights, and sweetest contents, are in the country above; and therefore hope loves best to live there most.

[2.] *The second property* of that hope that accompanies salvation is this: *it will strengthen the soul against all afflictions, oppositions, and temptations:* 1 Thes. v. 8, 'But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.' Look, as the helmet defends and secures the head, so doth hope defend and secure the heart. Hope is a helmet that keeps off all darts that Satan or the world casts at the soul. The hopes of heavenly riches made those worthies in Heb. xi. to despise the riches of this world.[1] The hopes they had of a heavenly country made them willing to leave their own country, and to live in the very land of promise as in a strange country. The hopes they had of possessing at last a house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens, made them willingly and cheerfully to live in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and caves of the earth. The hopes they had of a glorious resurrection made them courageously to withstand the strongest temptations, &c., Rom. v. 2–5. A saint's hope will outlive all fears and cares, all trials and troubles, all afflictions and temptations. Saints have much in hope, though little in hand; they have much in reversion, though but little in possession; they have much in promise, though but little in the purse. A saint can truly say, *Spero meliora*, my hopes are better than my possessions. Hope can see heaven through the thickest clouds; hope can see light through darkness, life through death, smiles through frowns, and glory through misery. Hope holds life and soul together; it holds Christ and the soul together; it holds the soul and the promises together; it holds the soul and heaven together; and so it makes a Christian to stand and triumph over all afflictions, oppositions, and temptations.[2]

[3.] *The third property* of that hope that accompanies salvation is this: *it makes the soul lively and active:* Ps. cxix. 166, 'Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.' Hope puts the soul upon doing, upon obeying: 1 Peter i. 3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant (or much, πολὺ) mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' It is called a lively hope,

them as high as heaven; under all their hopes they are as very enemies, and as great strangers to God, Christ, and heaven, as ever.

[1] Dan. iii. 37; Ps. iv. 6, 7; Heb. x. 34; 2 Cor. iv. 16–18. It was a wicked and hopeless cardinal that said, He would not leave his part in Paris for a part in paradise.

[2] Some are verily persuaded that the want of this divine hope hath been the reason that many among the heathen hath laid violent hands upon themselves. See Plutarch in Cæsar's and Cato's lives. Heb. xi. 10, 14, 16, 25, 32, compared.

because it brings life and comfort into the soul; and it is called a lively hope in opposition to the withering and dying hopes of hypocrites and wicked men; and it is called a lively hope, because it flows from lively causes, viz. the Spirit of Christ, and the soul's union and communion with Christ; but mainly it is called a lively hope because it puts the soul upon lively endeavours. Hope will make a man pray as for life, hear as for life, and mourn as for life, and obey as for life, and work and walk as for life. Hope will not say this work is too hard, and that work is too hot; this work is too high, and the other work is too low.[1] Hope will make a man put his hand to every work. Hope makes a man more motion than notion; it makes a man better at doing than at saying, &c. Hope gives life and strength to all religious duties and services: 1 Cor. ix. 10, 'He that plougheth should plough in hope; and he that thrasheth in hope shall be partaker of his hope.' Hope will put a Christian upon ploughing and thrashing, that is, upon the hardest and difficultest services for God and his glory. If fleshly hopes of gaining the honours, riches, and favours of this world made Absalom, Ahithophel, Jehu, Haman, and many heathens, full of life and activity, full of motion and action, verily holy and heavenly hopes will make men much more lively and active, by how much heavenly hopes are more excellent than earthly. A man full of hope will be full of action. A lively hope and a diligent hand are inseparable companions. Hope will make a man do though he dies for doing.[2]

[4.] *The fourth property* of that hope that accompanies salvation is this: *It will make a man sit, Noah-like, quiet and still in the midst of all storms and tempests, in the midst of all combustions, concussions, and mutations.* When others are at their wits' end, then hope will house the soul, and lodge it far[3] and quiet in the bosom of God: Job xi. 18, 'And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope: yea, thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety.' The Hebrew word that is here rendered *rest*, is from a root that signifies to rest and sleep quietly, as in one's bed.[4] Hope will bring the soul to bed safely and sweetly, in the darkest night, in the longest storm, and in the greatest tempest: Heb. vi. 19, 'Which hope we have as [an] anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.' Hope is that anchor of the soul, that keeps it quiet and still in all storms and tempests; it keeps the soul from dashing upon the rocks, and from being swallowed up in the sands. Hope is an anchor that is fastened above, not below; in heaven, not in earth; within the veil, not without; therefore the ship, the soul of a believer, must needs be safe and secure. That ship will never be split upon the rocks, whose anchor is in heaven. Hope enters within the veil, and takes fast anchor-hold on God himself; and therefore blow high, blow

[1] A man's duties and services usually are as his hopes are; if his hopes are weak and low, so will his services be; but if his hopes are spiritual, noble, and high, so will his motions and actions be. Divine hope makes saints as far excel all other men in their actings, as the angels do excel them. Some say hope and fasting are the two wings of prayer. Fasting is but as the wing of a bird, but hope is as the wing of an angel, bearing our prayers to the throne of grace.

[2] Fleshly hopes put the Romans upon doing very strange and wonderful exploits, as you may see in Plutarch, and other historians. [3] Spelled 'fare': qu. 'fair'?—G.

[4] תשכב, from שכב, to rest as men in their beds, or as the body rests in the grave.

low, rain or shine, the soul of a saint is safe. Divine hope settles the heart. He that cannot look for more than he hath, can never be settled nor satisfied. Our best and greatest estate lies in invisibles. Our perfect and complete estate here lies not in *re*, but in *spe;* it lies not in what we have in possession, but in what we have in expectation, in reversion.[1]

[5.] *The fifth property* of that hope that accompanies salvation is this: *It will work the soul to a quiet and patient waiting upon God for mercy, though God should delay the giving in of mercy:*[2] Rom. viii. 25, 'But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.' Ps. cxxx. 5, 6, 'I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning.' Hope will make a man wait, yea, wait long for a mercy, as it did Abraham, Rom. iv. 18–21. Though the vision stay, yet hope will wait for it, Hab. ii. 1–3; yet a little, little while, says hope, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry, Heb. x. 36, 37. The longer I wait for a mercy, the greater, better, and sweeter, at last, the mercy will prove, says hope.[3] It is not mercy, if it be not worth a waiting for, says hope; and if it be a mercy, thou canst not wait too long for it, says hope.

The men of Bethulia resolved to wait upon God but five days longer, but deliverance stayed seven days, and yet came at last. So says hope, though deliverance stay, though this and that mercy stays, as it were in the birth, yet it will come at last, therefore wait. Hope is not hasty in prefixing the time when God shall shew mercy, neither will it limit God to the way or manner of shewing mercy, but leave both the time and the manner to him that is wise and faithful. Says hope, Christ knows his own time, and his own time is best; though he stays long, yet he will certainly come, and he will not stay a moment beyond the time he hath prefixed; and therefore, says hope, be not weary, O soul, but still wait patiently upon the Lord: 1 Thes. i. 3, 'Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope.' Hope is the mother of patience and the nurse of patience; hope breeds patience, and hope feeds patience. If it were not for hope, the heart would die; and if it were not for hope, patience would die. Look, as faith gives life and strength to hope, so doth hope give life and strength to patience, therefore patience is called patience of hope. Hope maintains patience, as the fuel maintains the fire.[4]

[6.] *The sixth property* of that hope that accompanies salvation is this: *It is soul-purifying hope; it puts a Christian upon purifying himself, as Christ is pure:* 1 John iii. 3, 'And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as Christ is pure.'[5] Divine

[1] Chrysostom saith that hope is not only the anchor, but the ship to that good anchor. Hypocrites in stormy times are like ships without anchors, tossed up and down with every wave, and in danger of being split upon every rock, Job xxvii. 9, 10.

[2] Patience is nothing else but hope spun out. If you would lengthen patience, be sure to strengthen hope.

[3] Hope's motto is, *Quod defertur non aufertur*, forbearance is no acquittance.

[4] Pittacus, one of the seven sages, used to say, A wise man must recover that by patience which force cannot command. [Diogenes Laert. i. 77, 78.—G.] The Lord shews much mercy in timing our mercies for us. *Spes est meliorum.*—Drusius.

[5] In quality, though not in equality, *as* is not a note of parility or equality, but of re-

hope runs out into holiness. He that hath the purest and strongest hopes of being saved, is most studious and laborious to be sanctified. The Greek word ἁγνίζει, that is rendered *purifieth*, is a metaphor taken either from the ceremonial purifications in time of the Law, or else from goldsmiths purifying metals from their dross; and it notes thus much to us, that those that have hopes to reign with Christ in glory, that have set their hearts upon that pure and blissful state, that paradise, that holy and spiritual state of bliss that is made up of singleness and purity, they will purify both their insides and outsides, both body and soul, that they may answer to that excellent copy that Christ hath set before them, knowing that none shall enjoy everlasting glory but those that labour after perfect purity.

Now hope purifies the heart and life thus, by keeping the purest objects, as God, Christ, the word, and the soul together, and by making the soul serious and conscientious in the use of all soul-purifying ordinances, and by being a fire in the soul to burn up all those corruptions and principles of darkness that are contrary to that purity and glory that hope hath in her eye; and by working the soul to lean upon Christ, to live in Christ, and to draw purifying virtue from Christ, who is the spring and fountain of all purity and sanctity. And thus hope purifies those that expect to be like Christ in glory.[1]

[7.] *The seventh property* of that hope that accompanies salvation, that comprehends salvation, is this: *it is permanent and lasting; it will never leave the soul till it hath lodged it in the bosom of Christ.* Prov. xiv. 32, 'The righteous hath hope in his death.' The righteous man's hope will bed and board with him; it will lie down with him, and rise up with him; it will to the grave, to heaven with him: his motto is, *Cum expiro spero*, my hope lasts beyond life.[2]

The Jews' ancient custom was, by the way as they went with their corpse, to pluck up every one the grass, as who should say, they were not sorry as men without hope, for their brother was but so cropped off, and should spring up again in the morning of the resurrection. And the Jews to this very day stick not to call their Golgothas (*batte chiim*) the houses or places of the living.[3]

That hope that accompanies salvation is a long-lived hope; it is a living hope. 1 Peter i. 3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope,' or a living hope:[4] a hope that will not die, a hope that will not leave a man in life nor death. Ps. lxxi. 14, 'But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.' No

semblance and similitude: as there is a similitude betwixt the face itself and the image of the face in the glass, but no equality.

[1] How lively hope makes the soul in religious services, I have shewed in the third property.

[2] Prov. x. 28. Austin's hope made him long to die, that he might see that head that was once crowned with thorns.

[3] Hope made the ancients to call the days of their death *natalia*, not dying but birth-days, Heb. iii. 6, and vi. 11; 1 Peter i. 13; Ps. cxxxi. 3.

[4] ζῶσαν, living; תמיד איחל. In prosperity and adversity, in health and sickness, in life and death, I will hope. It is neither the smiles nor the frowns of the world that shall bury a Christian's hope. A Christian's hope will live in all weathers, and it will make a Christian bear up bravely in all storms and under all changes.

trials, no troubles, no afflictions, no oppositions, shall keep down my hope, says David. I am peremptorily resolved, in the face of all dangers, difficulties, and deaths, to keep up my hopes; come what will come on it, I will rather let my life go than my hope go: I will hope continually. A hopeless condition is a very sad condition; it is the worst condition in the world; it makes a man's life a very hell. If 'hope deferred maketh the heart sick,' as the wise man speaks, Prov. xiii. 12, then the loss of hope will make the soul languish, it will make it choose strangling rather than life; it will make a man's life a continual death. A soul without hope is like a ship without anchors. Lord, where will a soul stay that stays not upon thee by hope? A man were better part with anything than his hope.

When Alexander went upon a hopeful expedition, he gave away his gold; and when he was asked what he kept for himself, he answered, *Spem majorum et meliorum*, the hope of greater and better things. A believer's hope is not like that of Pandora, which may fly out of the box, and bid the soul an everlasting farewell.[1] No; it is like the morning light; the least beam of it shall commence into a complete sunshine. It is *aurora gaudii*, and it shall shine forth brighter and brighter till it hath fully possessed the believer of his Christ and crown. This will be the hypocrite's hell and horror when he comes to die, that his hope will be like the morning dew, like the spider's web, like the crackling of thorns under a pot, and like the giving up of the ghost, Job viii. 13, 14, and xi. 20, and xxvii. 8; Prov. xiv. 32, and xi. 7. And this is now the upright man's joy, that whoever leaves him, yet his hope will not leave him, till he hath put on his crown and is set down in paradise.[2] And thus you see what hope that is that doth accompany salvation. Before I close up this chapter, take these two cautions with you; they make for your comfort and settlement.

[1.] *The first caution* is this: *that all saints have not these things that accompany salvation in the same degree.* If thou hast but the least measure or degree of that knowledge that accompanies salvation, or of that faith that accompanies salvation, or of that repentance, or of that obedience, or of that love, &c., that accompanies salvation, thou mayest be as assuredly confident of thy salvation, as if thou wast already in heaven. The least degree, O Christian, of those things that accompany salvation, will certainly yield thee a heaven hereafter, and why then should it not yield thee a heaven here? It will undoubtedly yield thee a crown at last; and why should it not yield thee comfort and assurance now? I judge it may, if thou art not an enemy to thine own soul, and to thy own peace and comfort.[3]

[2.] *The second caution* is this: *Though thou dost not find every one of those things in thee that do accompany salvation, yet if thou dost find some of those things, ay, though but a few of those things, yea,*

[1] Philostratus, *Vit.* Apoll., vi. 39.—G.

[2] I have read of a Rhodian, who being cast into a dungeon full of adders and snakes, for some horrid crimes by him committed, some persuaded him to rid himself out of that misery by a violent way; but he answered, No; for, saith he, as long as I have breath in my nostrils, I will ever hope for my deliverance.

[3] The Scripture tells you of saints of several sizes: some are babes, some are children, some are young men, some are old men. Now, all these do not attain to the same degree; but happy is he that hath the least degree.

though but one of those things that accompanies salvation, that comprehends salvation, that borders upon salvation, thy estate is safe, and happiness will be thy portion at last. Thy sense and feeling of one of those precious things that accompanies salvation, should be of more power to work thee to conclude that thy estate is good, than any other thing should work thee to conclude that all is naught, and that thou shalt miscarry at last. Do not always side with sin and Satan against thine own precious soul.[1]

Having thus discovered to you the way and means of attaining to a well-grounded assurance, I shall now hasten to a close.

CHAPTER VI.

Shewing the difference between a true and a counterfeit assurance, between sound assurance and presumption.

(1.) *The first difference.* A sound and well-grounded assurance *is attended with a deep admiration of God's transcendent love and favour to the soul in the Lord Jesus.* The assured soul is often a-breathing it out thus: Ah, Lord! who am I, what am I, that thou shouldst give into my bosom the white stone of absolution, when the world hath given into their bosoms only the black stone of condemnation? Rev. ii. 17.[2] Lord! what mercy is this, that thou shouldst give me assurance, give me water out of the rock, and feed me with manna from heaven, when many of thy dearest ones spend their days in sighing, mourning and complaining for want of assurance. Lord! what manner of love is this, that thou shouldst set me upon thy knee, embrace me in thy arms, lodge me in thy bosom, and kiss me with the sweet kisses of thy blessed mouth, with those kisses that are 'better than wine,' Cant. i. 2, yea, better than life, when many are even weary of their lives because they want what I enjoy? Ps. lxiii. 3. Ah, Lord! by what name shall I call this mercy, this assurance that thou hast given me? It being a mercy that fits me to do duties, to bear crosses, and to improve mercies; that fits me to speak sweetly, to judge righteously, to give liberally, to act seriously, to suffer cheerfully, and to walk humbly.[3] I cannot, says the assured soul, but sing it out with Moses, 'Who is like unto thee, O Lord, amongst the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?' Exod. xv. 2. And with the apostle, 'Oh, the height, the depth, the length and breadth of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,' Eph. iii. 18, 19. If the queen of Sheba, says the assured soul, was so swallowed up in a deep admiration of Solomon's wisdom, greatness, goodness, excellency and glory, that she could not but admiringly breathe it thus out, 'Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom,' 1 Kings

[1] No saints are at all times sensible that all those precious things that accompany salvation are in them. It is not always day with the saints.

[2] The white stone given among the Romans was a sign of absolution, and the black stone was a sign of condemnation.

[3] Assurance is a wonderful alchemy; it changeth iron to gold, ignominies to crowns, and all sufferings to delights.

x. 8, Oh then, how should that blessed assurance that I have of the love of God, of my interest in God, of my union and communion with God, of my blessedness here and my happiness hereafter, work me to a deep and serious, to a real and perpetual, admiration of God.[1]

[2.] *The second difference.* Secondly, A well-grounded assurance doth always *beget in the soul an earnest and an impatient longing after a further, a clearer, and fuller enjoyment of God and Christ.* Ps. lxiii. 1, 'O God, thou art my God'—here is assurance; well, what follows?—'early will I seek thee. My soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.'[2] The assured soul cries out, 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ,' Philip. i. 23; and, 'Make haste, my beloved,' Cant. viii. 14; and, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly,' Rev. xxii. 17. O Lord Jesus, says the assured soul, thou art my light, thou art my life, thou art my love, thou art my joy, thou art my crown, thou art my heaven, thou art my all. I cannot but long to see that beautiful face that was spit upon for my sins, and that glorious head that was crowned with thorns for my transgressions. I long to take some turns with thee in paradise, to see the glory of thy Jerusalem above, to drink of those rivers of pleasures that be at thy right hand, to taste of all the delicates of thy kingdom, and to be acquainted with those secrets and mysteries that have been hid from all ages, and to be swallowed up in the full enjoyment of thy blessed self, Eph. iii. 5, Col. i. 26.[3]

[3.] *The third difference.* Thirdly, A well-grounded assurance *is usually strongly assaulted by Satan on all sides.*[4] Satan is such a grand enemy to joy and peace, to the salvation and consolation, of the saints, that he cannot but make use of all his devices and stratagems to amaze and amuse, to disturb and disquiet, the peace and rest of their souls. No sooner had Jesus Christ heard that lovely voice from heaven, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' Mat. iii. 17 and iv. 1, 2, &c., but he is desperately assaulted by Satan in the wilderness. No sooner was Paul dropped out of heaven, after he had seen such visions of glory that was unutterable, but he was presently assaulted and buffeted by Satan, 2 Cor. ii. 12. Stand up, stand up, assured Christians, and tell me whether you have not found the blast of the terrible one to be as a storm against the wall, Isa. xxv. 4. Since the Lord said unto you, Be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you, have not you found Satan to play the part both of the lion and the wolf, of the serpent and the fox? And all to weaken your assurance, and to work you to question the truth of your assurance, and to cast water upon your assurance, and to take off the freshness and sweetness, the beauty and glory, of your assurance; I know you have.[5] His malice, envy, and enmity is such against God's

[1] Assurance of Christ's love made Jerome admiringly to say, O my Saviour, didst thou die for love of me alone, a [death] more dolorous than death, but to me a death more lovely than life itself! I cannot live, love thee, and be longer from thee.

[2] David, though in a wilderness, seeks not for bread or water or protection, but for more of God.

[3] The assured soul's motto is, O my God! when shall I be with thee, when shall I be with thee?

[4] The devil marcheth well armed, and in good array, saith Luther.

[5] I verily think that they have very much cause to question the truth of their assurance, who know not what it is to have their assurance assaulted strongly by Satan.

honour and glory, and your comfort and felicity, that he cannot but be very studious and industrious to make use of all traps, snares, methods, and ways whereby he may shake the pillars of your faith, and weaken and overthrow your assurance. Pirates, you know, do most fiercely assault those ships and vessels that are most richly laden;[1] so doth Satan those precious souls that have attained to the riches of full assurance.[2]

Assurance makes a paradise in believers' souls, and this makes Satan to roar and rage. Assurance fits a man to do God the greatest service and Satan the greatest dis-service, and this makes him mad against the soul. Assurance makes a saint to be too hard for Satan at all weapons, yea, to lead that 'son of the morning' captive, to spoil him of all his hurting power, to bind him in chains, and to triumph over him; and this makes his hell a great deal hotter, Rom. viii. 32–39. And therefore never wonder at Satan's assaulting your assurance, but expect it and look for it. The jailor is quiet when his prisoner is in bolts, but if he be escaped then he pursues him with hue and cry.[3] So long as the soul is in bolts and bondage under Satan, Satan is quiet and is not so apt to molest and vex it; but when once a soul is made free, and assured of his freedom by Christ, John viii. 36, then says Satan, as once Pharaoh did, 'I will arise, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them,' Exodus xv. 9. The experience of all assured saints doth abundantly confirm this. Israel going into Egypt had no enemies, no opposition, but travelling into Canaan they were never free.

[4.] *The fourth difference.* Fourthly, A well grounded-assurance *makes a man as bold as a lion; it makes him valiant and gallant for Christ and his cause, in the face of all dangers and deaths.*[4] After the Holy Ghost was fallen upon the apostles, and had assured them of their internal and eternal happiness, oh! how bold, how undaunted, how resolute were they in the face of all oppositions, afflictions, and persecutions! as you may see from the second of the Acts of the Apostles to the end of the Acts. So assurance had this operation upon David's heart: Ps. xxiii. 4, 6 compared, 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.' Well, David, but how doth this assurance of yours operate? Why, saith he 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.' So Moses having an assurance of the 'recompence of reward,' he fears not the wrath of the king, 'for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible,' Heb. xi. 26, 27. So in Heb. x. 34, 'And ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.'[5] Oh, that knowledge, that assurance that they

[1] See Index under Leighton.—G.

[2] Satan is that old serpent, as John speaks, Rev. xii. 9. He is as old as the world, and is grown very cunning by experience, he being a spirit of above five thousand years' standing.

[3] Luther cries out, I am set upon by all the world without, and within by the devil and all his angels.

[4] *Tanto plus gloriæ referemus quoniam eo plures superabimus.* The number of opposers makes the Christian's conquest the more illustrious, say saints under the power of assurance, &c.

[5] ἐκαρτέρησε, was constant. . . . γινώσκοντες ἔχειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, Knowing that you have in yourselves, Κρείττονα ὕπαρξιν ἐν οὐρανοῖς καὶ μένουσαν, a better being in heaven, and an abiding one.

had in their own hearts of enjoying in heaven a better and a more enduring substance, made them bear cheerfully and gallantly the spoiling of their worldly goods. Though the archers—the world, the flesh, and the devil—do shoot sore at a soul under assurance, yet his bow will still abide in strength. Assurance will make a man to break a bow of steel, to trample down strength, and to triumph over all oppositions and afflictions.

Colonus the Dutch martyr called to the judge that had sentenced him to death, and desired him to lay his hand upon his heart, and asked him whose heart did most beat, his or the judge's. Assurance will make a man do this, and much more for Christ and his cause.

[5.] *The fifth difference.* Fifthly, A well-grounded assurance of a man's own eternal happiness and blessedness will *make him very studious and laborious to make others happy:* Ps. lxvi. 16, 'Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul.' I will acquaint you with the soul blessings, with the soul favours, that God hath crowned me with. I was darkness, but he hath made me light; I was unrighteousness, but he hath made me righteous; I was deformed, but he hath made me complete; I was full of sores, and spots, and blemishes, but he hath washed me, and made me all fair, without spot or wrinkle. I have found the want of assurance, I now see the worth of assurance; I have long sought assurance, and now I find the sweetness of assurance. Ah! it is such a pearl of price, it is such a beam of God, it is such a spark of glory, that makes my soul a rich amends for all its waiting, weeping, and wrestling.[1]

So, when it pleased God to call Paul by his grace, and to reveal Christ in him[2] and to him, ah! how doth he labour, as for life, to bring others to an acquaintance with Christ, and to an acceptance of Christ, and to an assurance of everlasting happiness and blessedness by Christ! After Paul had been in paradise, he makes it his all to bring others to paradise, 2 Cor. xii. So the spouse in the Canticles, having assurance of her interest in Christ, how doth she labour, by all holy and heavenly rhetoric and logic, by all the strains of love and sweetness, to draw the daughters of Jerusalem to a sight of Christ! Cant. v. 10–16, and vi. 1, &c. When a beam of divine light and love had shined upon Andrew, he labours to draw his brother Simon to the fountain of all light and love, John i. 40–42. And when Philip had but a cast of Christ's countenance, his pulse beats, and his heart calls upon Nathanael to come and share with him in that loving-kindness that was better than life, John i. 43–47.

The constant cry of souls under the power of assurance is, 'Come, taste and see how good the Lord is,' Ps. xxxiv. 8. Ah, sinners, sinners! 'his ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace,' Prov. iii. 17; his 'commands are not grievous,' 1 John v. 3, but joyous; 'his yoke is easy, and his burden is light,' Mat. xi. 30; not only *for* keeping, but also '*in* keeping of his commands there is great reward,' Ps. xix. 11. Assurance will strongly put men upon winning of others by counsel, by example, by prayer, and by communicating their spiritual experiences to them. Assurance will furnish a man with will, skill, and expe-

[1] Eph. v. 8; 1 Cor. i. 30; Col. ii. 10; Isa. i. 6; Eph. v. 26, 27; Cant. iv. 7.
[2] Gal. i. 15, 16, ἐν ἐμοὶ, in me.

rience to confute all those false reports that vain men frequently cast upon the Lord and his ways. It will make a man proclaim to the world 'that one day in the Lord's courts is better than a thousand years elsewhere,' Ps. lxxxiv. 10; that there are more glorious joys, more pure comforts, more abiding peace, more royal contents, more celestial delights, in one day's walking with God, in one hour's communion with God, &c., than is to be found in all things below God. And by these and such like ways, souls under the power of a well-grounded assurance do endeavour to make others happy with themselves. A soul under assurance is unwilling to go to heaven without company. He is often a-crying out, Father, bless this soul too, and crown that soul too: let us to heaven together, let us be made happy together.

[6.] *The sixth difference.* Sixthly, A well-grounded assurance of God's love, and of a man's everlasting happiness and blessedness, *will exceedingly arm and strengthen him against all wickedness and baseness*, Ezek. xvi. 60–63. No man loathes sin, and himself for sin, as such a man; no man wars and watches against sin more than such a man; no man sighs and mourns, bleeds and complains, under the sense of sinful motions and sinful operations more than such a man, Luke vii. 44, 50. Every stirring of sin makes a man that is under the power of assurance to cry out, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?' Rom. vii. 22–25: Ps. lxxxv. 8, 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak; for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: and let them not turn again to folly,' or, as the Hebrew will bear, 'And they shall not return to folly.' God's speaking peace to his people fences and fortifies them against folly and vanity.

The assurance that Joseph had of his master's love armed him against the lascivious assaults of his lustful mistress; and will not divine love, that is stronger than death, do this and more? Cant. viii. 6, 7. Assurance makes a man say to his sins, as he to his idols, 'Get you hence, for what have I any more to do with idols?'[1] So says the assured soul, Away pride, away passion, away worldly-mindedness, away uncleanness, away uncharitableness, &c., for what have I any more to do with you? Assurance makes the soul speak to sin as David speaks to sinners: Ps. cxix. 115, 'Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; for I will keep the commandments of my God:' so says the assured soul, Depart from me, O my lusts, for I have tasted of the love of God, and I have given up myself wholly and only to God, and I cannot but keep the commandments of my God. The Jewish Rabbins report, that the same night that Israel departed out of Egypt towards Canaan, all the idols and idolatrous temples in Egypt, by lightning and earthquakes, were broken down. So when Christ and assurance comes to be set up in the soul, all the idols of Satan and a man's own heart are cast down, and cast out as an abomination. Sound assurance puts a man upon 'purifying himself, even as Christ is pure,' 1 John iii. 2, 3. The assured Christian knows, that it is dangerous to sin against light, that it is more dangerous to sin against love, that it is most dangerous to sin against love revealed and manifested. God may well say to such a

[1] Hosea xiv. 8, compared with verses 2–6.

Christian, Is this thy kindness to thy friend? To sin under assurance, is to sin against the bowels of mercy, it is to sin against the highest hopes of glory; and this will certainly provoke God to be angry. 1 Kings xi. 9, 'And the Lord was angry with Solomon,[1] because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, that had appeared to him twice.' To sin under assurance, is to sin in paradise; it is to sin under the flaming sword, it is to sin in the suburbs of heaven, it is to run the hazard of losing that favour 'that is better than life,' of that 'joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,' and of that 'peace that passes understanding.' To sin under assurance, is to cast reproach upon Christ, to grieve the Spirit, to wound conscience, to weaken your graces, to blur your evidences, to usher in calamities, to embitter your mercies, and to provoke the tempter to triumph over your Saviour. Verily, that assurance is but presumption that works men to play with sin, to be bold with sin, to make light of sin, to walk on in ways of sin. Such assurance will never bring a man to heaven, it will never keep him from dropping into hell, yea, it will double his damnation, and make him the most miserable among all damned, miserable, forlorn spirits. Ah, Lord! from such an assurance deliver my soul; and give me more and more of that divine assurance that makes sin to be more hateful than hell, and that makes the soul to be more careful to avoid the one, than it is fearful of falling into the other.[2]

[7.] *The seventh difference.* Seventhly, A well-grounded assurance *is always attended with three fair handmaids, or with three sweet companions,*

(1.) *The first handmaid.* The first is *love.* Oh! the assurance of divine favour doth mightily inflame a man's love to Christ. Mary Magdalene loved much; Christ's love to her drew out her love very much to Christ, Luke vii. Assurance makes the soul sing it out with that sweet singer of Israel, 'I will dearly love thee, O Lord, my strength,' Ps. xviii. 2.[3] Lovers know not how to keep silence; lovers of Christ are full of gracious expressions. *Magnes amoris est amor;* love is the attractive loadstone of love. It is impossible for a soul not to love Christ, that knows he is beloved of Christ. Christ's love constrains the soul to love, not by forcible but loving necessity. Praxiteles exquisitely drew love, taking the pattern from that passion which he felt in his own heart. A believer cannot find the heart of Christ to be beating towards him, but his heart will strongly beat towards Christ. Divine love is like a rod of myrtle, which, as Pliny reports, makes the traveller that carries it in his hand, that he shall never be faint, weary of walking, or loving.[4] Love alone overpowereth all power. Love is the diadem; none but the queen must wear it. Love is the wedding garment; none but the spouse can fit it. Love is a loadstone to draw, as well as a fire to warm. He that doth not love Christ, was never assured of the love of Christ.

[1] ויתאנף, *Vaiithannaph* in Pihil, to shew that the Lord was greatly angry with Solomon. The root אנף, signifies properly to snuff with anger. It notes such anger as appeareth in the paleness of the face, and snuffing of the nose.

[2] This made Anselm say, That he had rather be thrust into hell without sin, than go into heaven with sin.

[3] ארחמך, from רחם, to love intimately and dearly, as a tender mother loves the fruit of her womb.

[4] See Index under *Myrtle.* for former allusions.—G.

(2.) *The second handmaid,* or companion that attends a well-grounded assurance, is *humility.* David, under assurance, cries out, 'I am a worm and no man,'[1] Ps. xxii. 6; Abraham, under assurance, cries out, that he is but 'dust and ashes;' Jacob, under assurance, cries out, that he was 'less than the least of all mercies;' Job, under assurance, 'abhors himself in dust and ashes;' Moses had the honour and the happiness to speak with God 'face to face;' he was very much in God's books, in God's favour; and yet a more humble soul the earth did never bear. The great apostle Paul, under all the revelations and glorious manifestations of God to him, counts himself 'less than the least of all saints,' Eph. iii. 8. That is presumption, that is a delusion of the devil, and no sound assurance, that puffs and swells the souls of men, that makes men prize themselves above the market, above the value that God hath put upon them.

(3.) *The third handmaid* or companion that attends assurance, is *holy joy.* Ah! this assurance causes the strong waters of consolation to overflow the soul. Assurance raises the strongest joy in the soul: Luke i. 46, 47, and Mary said, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.' When a man comes to be assured that God is his Saviour, presently his spirit rejoices in God. This truth is held forth by three parables in that of Luke xv., so in that of 1 Peter i. 8, 9, 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.'[2] Oh the joy, the joy, the inexpressible joy that attends a well-grounded assurance! Assurance raises a paradise of delight in the soul. *In quibus operamur, in illis et gaudemus,* saith Tertullian: in what things or persons we act, in those things we rejoice.[3] A Christian, under the power of assurance, works all his works in Christ; in him, therefore, and in him alone, he rejoiceth.

[8.] *The eighth difference.* Eighthly, and lastly, A well-grounded assurance *sometimes springs from the testimony and witness of the Spirit of God.* The Spirit sometimes witnesses to a believer's spirit that he is born of God, that he is beloved of God, that he hath union and communion with God, and that he shall reign for ever with God: Rom. viii. 26, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God.' The Spirit itself witnesseth not only the gifts and graces of the Spirit, but the Spirit itself witnesseth together with our own spirit, that we are the children of God.[4] Sometimes the saints have two witnesses joining their testimonies together to confirm and establish them in these blessed and glorious truths, that they are the sons of God and heirs of glory; and this is their honour as well as their comfort, that the blessed Spirit should bear witness at the bar of their consciences that they are the sons of God: 1 Cor. ii. 12, 'Now we have

[1] תולעת. The Hebrew word *tolagnah,* that is here rendered worm, signifies a very little worm, which a man can hardly see or perceive.

[2] Ἀγαλλιᾶσθε, to dance and leap for joy; δεδοξασμένη, glorified already, they have heaven's happiness beforehand.

[3] Apology: frequently.—G.

[4] αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα, that same spirit. The Spirit's work is not μαρτυρεῖν, but συμμαρτυρεῖν, to witness together with our spirit, that is, to confirm and ratify what our spirits have asserted concerning our adoption, &c.

received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God;' that is, that we may know our election, vocation, justification, sanctification, and glorification. A man may receive many things that are freely given of God, and yet not know them till the Spirit comes and makes them known to the soul.

Quest. But you may say to me, How shall we know the whispering of the Holy Spirit from the hissing of the old serpent? How shall we know the report, the witness, and testimony of the Spirit of Christ, from that report, witness, and testimony that the old serpent deludes and deceives many by, in these days wherein he mostly appears in his angelical robes?

Ans. I answer, you may know the whispering of the Spirit from the hissing of the old serpent, &c., by these following things, which I desire that you would seriously consider, as you tender the peace and settlement, the satisfaction, consolation, and salvation of your own souls.

(1.) *The first difference.* First, The Spirit of Christ *doth not witness by any outward voice, as God did from heaven of Christ,* Mat. iii. 17; *nor by an angel, as to the Virgin Mary,* Luke i. 30–34; *but by an inward, secret, glorious, and unspeakable way he bids believers be of good cheer, their sins are forgiven them, as Christ said to the palsied man in the Gospel,* Mat. ix. 2. And this truth is to be solemnly minded against those poor deceived and deluded souls in these days,[1] that would make the world believe that they have had such and such glorious things made known by an outward, audible voice from heaven. It is much to be feared that they never found the inward, the sweet, the secret, the powerful testimony and report of the Spirit of Christ, that boast, and brag, and rest so much upon an outward testimony. In 1 Kings xix. 11–13, you read of 'a great strong wind that rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks: but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind there was an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire there was a still small voice,' and the Lord spake to Elijah in that still small voice. Ah, Christians! the Spirit of the Lord makes not a noise, but he comes in a still small voice, as I may say, and makes a soft and secret report to the soul, that it is beloved, that it is pardoned, and that it shall be for ever glorified.

(2.) *The second difference.* Secondly, The testimony and witness of the Spirit of Christ *is only gained and enjoyed in holy and heavenly ways,* as you may clearly see by comparing the Scriptures in the margin together.[2] The Spirit of the Lord is a Holy Spirit, and he cannot, he will not make any report of the love of the Father to the soul out of a way of holiness. Verily, all those glorious reports that many boast they have met with in sinful ways, in wretched and ungodly ways, are from the hissing of the old serpent, and not from the whisperings of the Spirit of grace. I think it is little less than blasphemy for any to affirm, that the blessed Spirit of Christ doth make reports of the love

[1] Quakers and Ranters.

[2] Acts x. 4: Dan. ix. 20–22; Isa. lxiv. 5; Acts x. 44, &c.

and favour of God to persons walking in ways of wickedness and baseness.[1]

(3.) *The third difference.* Thirdly, The testimony and witness of the Spirit of Christ, *is a clear, a full, a satisfying testimony and witness,* John xiv. 17, 1 John iii. 24. The soul sits down under the home-reports of the Spirit, and saith, Lord, it is enough; the soul being full, sits down and sweetly sings it out: 'My beloved is mine, and I am his. I am my well-beloved's, and his desire is towards me,' Cant. ii. 16, and vii. 10. 'The Lord is my portion and the lot of mine inheritance,' Ps. xvi. 5. 'I have none in heaven but thee, neither is there any on earth that I desire in comparison of thee,' Ps. lxxiii. 25. 'Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,' 2 Tim. iv. 8. 'Make haste, my beloved,' &c., Cant. viii. 14. Such power, majesty, and glory, attends the glorious testimony of the Spirit of Christ, as scatters all clouds, as resolves all doubts, as answers all objections, as silences the wrangling soul, &c. If the testimony of the Spirit of Christ were not a full, satisfying testimony, it could never fill the soul with such joy as is 'unspeakable and full of glory,' and with 'such peace as passes understanding;' if the testimony were not satisfactory, the soul would still be under fears and doubts, the heart would still be a-wrangling and quarrelling, I may perish, and I may be undone, I may have the door of mercy shut against me, &c. If you bring news to a condemned person that the king hath pardoned him, and that he will receive him to favour, and confer such and such dignity upon him, yet this doth not quiet him nor satisfy him, till he knows it is the king's act, till he is satisfied in that, he cannot say it is enough, he cannot be cheerful, he cannot be delightful, &c. But when he is satisfied that it is the king's act, that the king hath certainly done this and that for him, then he is satisfied, and then sighing and mourning flies away, and then he rejoices with joy unspeakable. So it is with a believing soul under the testimony and witness of the spirit of Christ.

(4.) *The fourth difference.* Fourthly, Though the Spirit be a witnessing Spirit, *yet he doth not always witness to believers their adoption, their interest in Christ, &c.* There is a mighty difference between the working of the Spirit and the witness of the Spirit. There are oftentimes many glorious and efficacious works of the Spirit, as faith, love, repentance, holiness, &c., where there is not the witness of the Spirit, Isa. l. 10. David at that very time had the Spirit, and many sweet workings of the Spirit in him and upon him, when he had by sin lost the witness and testimony of the Spirit, Ps. li. 10–12. Though the Spirit of the Lord be a witnessing and a sealing Spirit, yet he doth not alway witness and seal up the love and favour of the Father to believers' souls, as you may see by the scriptures in the margin,[2] and as the experience of many precious Christians can abundantly evidence. All believers do not see alike need of this testimony, they do not all alike prize this testimony, they do not all alike observe it and improve it; and therefore, it is no wonder if the Spirit be a witnessing Spirit to some and not to others. You do but gratify Satan and wrong your

[1] Yet this age hath many such monsters.

[2] Job xxiii. 8, 9; 1 John v. 13; Ps. lxxxviii., lxxvii.; Micah. vii. 8, 9; Isa. viii. 17.

own souls, when you argue that certainly you have not the Spirit, because he is not a witnessing and a sealing Spirit to your souls. Though it be the office of the Spirit to witness, yet it is not his office always to witness to believers their happiness and blessedness. The Spirit may act one way and in one room of the soul, when he doth not act in another. Sometimes the Spirit works upon the understanding, sometimes upon the will, sometimes upon the affections, sometimes upon faith, sometimes upon fear, sometimes upon love, sometimes upon humility, &c. Our hearts are the Spirit's harps. If a man should always touch one string in an instrument, he should never play various tunes, he should never make pleasant music; no more would the Spirit, if he should be always a-doing one thing in the soul. Therefore he acts variously. Sometimes he will shew himself a quickening Spirit, sometimes an enlightening Spirit, sometimes a rejoicing Spirit, sometimes a sealing Spirit, and always a supporting Spirit, &c.[1]

(5.) *The fifth difference.* Fifthly, The testimony and witness of the Spirit *is a sure testimony, a sure witness.* The Spirit is truth itself; he is the great searcher of the deep things of God. The Spirit of the Lord is the discoverer, the confuter, and destroyer of all false spirits.[2] The Spirit is above all possibility of being deceived, he is omnipotent, he is omniscient, he is omnipresent, he is one of the cabinet-council of heaven; he lies and lives in the bosom of the Father, and can call them all by name upon whom the Father hath set his heart, and therefore his testimony must needs be true. It is a surer testimony than if a man should hear a voice from heaven pronouncing him to be happy and blessed. You may safely and securely lay the weight of your souls upon this testimony; it never hath, it never will deceive any that hath leaned upon it. This testimony will be a rock that will bear up a soul, when other false testimonies will be but 'a reed of Egypt,' that will deceive the soul, that will undo the soul; as I am afraid many in this deluding age have found by sad experience.

(6.) *The sixth difference.* Sixthly, The testimony of God's Spirit *is always accompanied with the testimony of our own.*[3] These may be distinguished, but they can never be separated. When the Spirit of God gives in witness for a man, his own spirit doth not give in witness against him. Look, as face answers to face, so doth the witness of a believer's spirit answer to the witness of the Spirit of Christ. Rom. viii. 16, 'The Spirit witnesseth together with our spirits that we be the sons of God.' Now, if our own consciences do not testify first, that we are sons and heirs, the Spirit doth not testify; for the Spirit bears witness together with our spirits. St John is very express in 1 John iii. 21, 'But if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. But if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things.' 1 John v. 8–12, and 'There are three that

[1] A man may be a-doing in one room, when he is not in another. So is the Spirit in the heart of a saint.

[2] Titus i. 2; John xiv. 17; 1 Cor. ii. 10; 1 John iv. 1–5.

[3] I do not say that the testimony of our spirits is always accompanied with the testimony of the Spirit. No; for a believer hath often the single testimony of his own spirit, when he wants the testimony of the Spirit of Christ, and the single testimony of his own conscience will afford him much courage and comfort, 2 Cor. i. 12. Yea, it will make a paradise of delight in his soul, &c.

bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one.' The Spirit doth witness eminently and efficiently, but water and blood materially, and our spirits and reason instrumentally. By the Spirit we may understand the Holy Ghost, by whose strength we lay hold on Christ and all his benefits. By water we may understand our regeneration, our sanctification; and by blood we may understand the blood and righteousness of Christ, that is imputed and applied by faith to us. 'And these three agree in one,' that is, they do all three of one accord testify the same thing.

(7.) *The seventh difference.* Seventhly, The witness of the Spirit *is ever according to the word.* There is a sweet harmony between the inward and the outward testimony, between the Spirit of God and the word of God. The scriptures were all indited by the Spirit, 2 Peter i. 20, 21; and therefore the Spirit cannot contradict himself, which he should do, if he should give in any testimony contrary to the testimony of the word. It is blasphemy to make the testimony of the Spirit to contradict the testimony of the word. The Spirit hath revealed his whole mind in the word, and he will not give a contrary testimony to what he hath given in the word. The word saith, They that are born again, that are new creatures, that believe and repent, shall be saved. But thou art born again, thou art a new creature, thou believest and repentest; therefore thou shalt be saved, saith the Spirit. The Spirit never looseth where the word bindeth, the Spirit never justifies where the word condemns, the Spirit never approves where the word disapproves, the Spirit never blesses where the word curses. In the Old Testament all revelations were to be examined by the word, Deut. xiii. 1–4. Isa. viii. 20, 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light (or no morning) in them.'[1] So in that of John xvi. 13, 'The Spirit shall lead you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but what he shall hear, that shall he speak.' Here the Holy Ghost is brought in as some messenger or ambassador who only relates things faithfully according to that he hath in charge. Such as look and lean upon the hissing of the old serpent, may have a testimony that they are happy, against the testimony of the word; but wherever the Spirit of Christ gives in his testimony, it is still according to the word. Look, as indenture answers to indenture, or as the counterpain[2] exactly answers to the principal conveyance; there is article for article, clause for clause, covenant for covenant, word for word; so doth the testimony of the Spirit exactly answer to the testimony of the word.

(8.) *The eighth difference* Eighthly, *It is a holy witness, a holy testimony.*[3] It is formally, it is originally holy, it is effectually holy. Nothing makes the heart more in the love, study, practice, and growth of holiness, than the glorious testimony of the Holy Spirit; and the more clear and full the testimony is, the more holy and gracious it will make

[1] איזלו שהר. We are not only blind, but lame too; therefore the Spirit shall lead us to the knowledge and practice of all necessary saving truths.

[2] 'Counterpain,' *i. e.* counterpart, adds another to Halliwell's examples of the rare use of this word. See Halliwell, *sub voce.*—G.

[3] *Nil nisi sanctum à sancto Spiritu prodiere potest,* nothing can come from the Holy Spirit but that which is holy.

the soul. Nothing puts such golden engagements upon the soul to holiness, as the Spirit sealing a man up to the day of redemption, as the Spirit speaking and sealing peace, love, and pardon to the soul, Ps. lxxxv. 8; 1 Cor. xv. 31; 2 Cor. v. 14. Nothing makes a man more careful to please Christ, more fearful to offend Christ, more studious to exalt Christ, and more circumspect to walk with Christ, than this testimony of the Spirit of Christ. Verily, that is not the blessed whispering of Christ's Spirit, but the hissing of the old serpent, that makes men bold with sin, that makes men dally with sin, that makes man a servant to sin, that breeds a contempt of ordinances, a neglect of holy duties, a carelessness in walking with God. And from those hissings of the old serpent, O Lord, deliver my soul, and the souls of all thy servants that put their trust in thee!

(9.) *The ninth difference.* Ninthly and lastly, *Assurance is a jewel, a pearl of that price, that God only bestows it upon renewed hearts.* The Spirit never sets his seal upon any, but upon those that Christ hath first printed his image upon. God gives to none the white stone, Rev. ii. 17, but to those from whom he hath taken the heart of stone; Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27 compared. Christ never tells a man that his name is written in the book of life, till he hath breathed into him spiritual life, Luke x. 20. Christ never says, Son, be of good cheer, thy sin is pardoned, till he hath first said, Be thou healed, be thou cleansed, Luke v. 18–20. Christ never gives a man a new name, that is better than the names of sons and daughters, till he hath made them new creatures, Isa. lvi. 5; 2 Cor. v. 17. Of slaves Christ first makes us sons, before we cry Abba, Father, Rom. viii. 15. Of enemies, he first makes us friends, before he will make us of his court or counsel, Eph. ii. 13–20. Christ will never hang a pearl in a swine's snout, nor put new wine into old bottles, nor his royal robes upon a leprous back, nor his golden chain about a dead man's neck, nor his glistering crown upon a traitor's head. The Spirit never sets his seal upon any, but upon those that Christ hath first set as a seal upon his heart, Eph. i. 13; Cant. viii. 6. The Spirit only bears witness to such as hate sin as Christ hates it, and that love righteousness as Christ loves it, that hate sin more than hell, and that love truth more than life, Ps. xlv. 7. A soul sealed by the Spirit will pull out right eyes, and cut off right hands, for Christ; such souls will part with a Benjamin, and offer up an Isaac, for Christ. And this is to be seriously minded against those deceived and deluded souls, that remain yet in their blood, and that wallow in their sins, and yet boast and brag of the seal and of the witness and testimony of the Spirit.

And thus I have shewed you the difference between the whisperings of the Spirit and the hissing of the old serpent, between a true testimony and a false.

CHAPTER VII.

Containing answers to several special questions about assurance.

[1.] *The first question.* But methinks I hear some precious souls

saying, Sirs! we have, after much praying, weeping, and waiting, gained this pearl of price, assurance; but oh, how shall we do to strengthen it, how shall we do to keep it? Satan will labour to weaken our assurance, and to rob us of this jewel that is more worth than a world; what means must we use to strengthen our assurance and to secure it? &c.

Now to this question I shall give these following answers:

First, If you would have your assurance strengthened and maintained, then *keep close to soul-strengthening ways, be serious and sincere, be diligent and constant in the use of those means and ways wherein you first gained assurance*, as prayer, the word, breaking of bread, communion of saints, &c.[1] A conscionable and cordial use of holy and heavenly means is blessed, not only with a preservation of assurance, but likewise with an addition and increase of it. The ways of God, and his goings in the sanctuary, have wrought wonders upon thee, when thou wast dead, how much more will they work upon thee and for thee, now thou art by grace made alive? He that will not apply himself to God's strengthening methods will quickly find his assurance weakened, if not wholly wasted. He that thinks himself too good for ordinances, will quickly grow weak in his assurance. The choicest prophets, and highest apostles, if I may so speak, that had attained to the fullest assurance, kept close to the ways and precious institutions of Christ.[2] Verily, those that pretend to live above ordinances, and yet live below them, never knew by experience what a mercy it was to have a well-grounded assurance, or else they have lost that blessed assurance that once they had, &c.

Secondly, If you would strengthen and maintain your assurance, then *dwell much upon your spiritual and eternal privileges*, viz., your adoption, justification, reconciliation, &c., 1 Peter ii. 9. This you shall find by experience will mightily tend to the strengthening and maintaining of your assurance. He that neglects this rule will quickly find his sun to set in a cloud, his harp to be turned into mourning, and his organ into the voice of them that weep,[3] Job xxx. 31.

Thirdly, If you would strengthen and maintain your assurance, then *look that your hearts run more out to Christ than to assurance;* to the sun than to the beams, to the fountain than to the stream, to the root than to the branch, to the cause than to the effect, Cant. i. 13. Assurance is sweet, but Christ is more sweet. Assurance is lovely, but Christ is altogether lovely, Cant. v. 16. Assurance is precious, but Christ is most precious, Prov. iii. 15. Though assurance be a flower that yields much comfort and delight, yet it is but a flower. Though assurance be a precious box, yet it is but a box. Though assurance be a ring of gold, yet it is but a ring of gold. And what is the flower to the root, what is the box to the ointment, what is the ring to the pearl? No more is assurance to Christ. Therefore let thy eye and heart, first, most, and last, be fixed upon Christ, then will assurance bed and board with thee; otherwise thou wilt quickly find thy summer to be turned into winter.

[1] The old rule was, *Hoc age.*

[2] A cool spirit is always a losing spirit; the doing heart, the diligent heart, turns the spark into a flame, the mite into a million, &c.

[3] Holy and heavenly privileges are the food by which assurance is cherished and maintained.

Fourthly, If you would strengthen and maintain your assurance, then look *that your hearts are more taken up with Christ than with your graces.* Though grace be a glorious creature, yet it is but a creature; therefore let grace have your eye, but be sure that Christ have your heart. Christ must have your heart. Christ will not allow your very graces to be corrivals with him. He that minds his graces more than Christ, or that sets his graces upon the throne with Christ, will quickly find what it is to lose the face and favour of Christ. Your graces are but Christ's servants and handmaids; you may look upon them, but you must not match with them. It is a reproach to Christ, that those who have married the master, should at the same time match with the servant.[1] The queen may look upon her glistering courtiers, but she must live upon the king; the wife may take pleasure in her lovely babes, but she must live upon her husband, and be most observant of her husband. So gracious souls may look upon their graces, but they must live upon king Jesus; they may take pleasure in their graces, but they must live upon Christ, and be most observant of Christ. This is the way to keep Christ and assurance, and he that walks contrary to this rule will soon find the loss of both. Christ will be *Alexander* or *Nemo;* he will be all in all, or he will be nothing at all. Though his coat was once divided, yet he will never suffer his crown to be divided, John xix. 23, Isa. xlii. 8.

Fifthly, If you would have your assurance strengthened and maintained, then *labour to improve it to the strengthening of you against temptations, to the fencing of you against corruptions, to the raising of your resolutions, to the inflaming of your affections, to the bettering of your conversations.*[2] Assurance is a pearl of price; he that will keep it must improve it. The ready way to maintain our natural strength, and to increase it, is to improve it. Assurance is one of the choicest and chiefest talents that ever God entrusted man with, and he that doth not improve it, and employ it, will quickly lose it, &c. God will not suffer so golden a talent to gather rust, Mat. xxv. 28. Win gold and wear gold, improve gold and keep gold; win assurance and wear assurance, improve assurance and keep assurance. Dionysius the elder, being advised of one that had hidden great store of money, commands him upon pain of death to bring it to him, which he did, but not all; but with the remainder he went and dwelt in another country, where he bought an inheritance, and fell upon some employment, which, when Dionysius heard, he sent him his money again which he had taken from him, saying, Now thou knowest how to use riches, take that I had from thee. I shall leave you to make the application.

Sixthly, If you would have your assurance strengthened and maintained, then *walk humbly with your God*, Micah vi. 8. God makes the humble man's heart his house to dwell in: Isa. lvii. 15, 'Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite

[1] Christ is the pot of manna, the cruse of oil, the bottomless ocean, the most sparkling diamond in the ring of glory, &c. When Darius sent to Alexander that he would be willing to divide the kingdom, No, saith Alexander, there is but one sun in the firmament, and there can be but one king in a kingdom. So saith Christ, &c.

[2] We have, saith Cyprian, no such notions as many philosophers have, but we are philosophers in our deeds; we do not speak great things, but we do great things in our lives.

and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.'[1] The highest heavens and the lowest hearts are the habitations wherein the Holy One delights to dwell. Now this phrase, 'I will dwell with the humble,' takes in several things: 1. It includes God's overlooking[2] the humble. 2. It takes in God's assisting and strengthening of the humble. 3. It takes in God's protection; I will dwell with the humble, that is, I will protect him and secure him, Job xxii. 29. 4. It takes in God's sympathizing with the humble. 5. It takes in God's applying all suitable good to the humble, Isa. lvii. 18, and lxiii. 9. 6. It takes in God's ruling and overruling the heart and the affections of the humble. 7. It takes in God's teaching and learning of the humble. But, 8, and lastly, It includes and takes in a clearer, a fuller, and a larger manifestation and communication of God to humble souls, Ps. x. 17, and xxv. 9. Ah! saith God, I will dwell with the humble; that is, I will more richly, more abundantly, and more gloriously manifest and make known my grace and glory, my goodness and sweetness, my loving-kindness and tenderness, to humble souls. Now tell me, humble souls, will not God's dwelling thus with you contribute very much to the strengthening and maintaining of your assurance? James iv. 6, 'But he giveth more grace: wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud' (or as the Greek word emphatically signifies, *ἀντιτάσσεται*, he sets himself in battle array against the proud), 'but giveth grace to the humble.' Humility is both a grace, and a vessel to receive grace. God pours in grace into the humble souls, as men pour liquor into an empty vessel. And verily, the more grace you have, the more will your assurance be strengthened and maintained. Well! remember this, the humble man's mercies are the sweetest mercies, the greatest mercies, the most growing and thriving mercies, the most blessed and sanctified mercies, and the most lasting and abiding mercies. Therefore, as you would have your assurance strengthened and maintained, walk humbly with your God; I say again, walk humbly, walk humbly with your God, and you shall wear the crown of assurance to your grave.

Seventhly, If you would keep and maintain your assurance, then *take heed and watch against those very particular sins by which other saints have lost their assurance.* Take heed of carnal confidence and security. David lost his assurance by not guarding his heart against those evils, Ps. xxx. 6, 7. Again, take heed of a light, slight, careless, and negligent spirit in holy and spiritual things. The spouse in the Canticles lost her assurance, and her sweet communion with Christ, by her slightness of spirit, Cant. v. 2, 3, 6, compared. Again, take heed of a stout and unyielding spirit under the afflicting hand of God; this made God hide his face from them, Isa. lvii. 17. In a word, take heed of tasting of forbidden fruit, remembering what Adam lost by a taste.

Eighthly, If you would maintain and keep your assurance, then *frequently and seriously consider of the wonderful difficulty of recovering assurance when it is lost.* Oh! the sighs, the groans, the complaints, the prayers, the tears, the heart-renting, the soul-bleeding that the

[1] וישפל־רוח, low of spirit. להחיות, to quicken or make to live the spirit of humble ones, Isa. xli. 10.

[2] 'Looking over,' = superintending.—G.

recovery of thy lost assurance will cost. The gaining of assurance at first cost thee dear, but the regaining of it, if thou shouldst be so unhappy as to lose it, will put thee to more pains and charge. Of the two, it is easier to keep assurance now thou hast it, than to recover it when thou hast lost it. It is easier to keep the house in reparations, than when it is fallen to build it up.[1]

Ninthly, and lastly, *Consider solemnly the sad and woful evils and inconveniences that will certainly follow upon the loss of your assurance.*[2] I will only touch upon a few.

(1.) None of the precious things of Christ will be so sweet to thee as formerly they have been.

(2.) You will neither be so fervent in duty, nor so frequent in duty, nor so abundant in duty, nor so spiritual in duty, nor so lively in duty, nor so cheerful in duty, as formerly you have been.

(3.) Afflictions will sooner sink you, temptations will sooner overcome you, oppositions will sooner discourage you.

(4.) Your mercies will be bitter, your life a burden, and death a terror to you; you will be weary of living, and yet afraid of dying, &c.

Now, the second question is this: Suppose souls have not been so careful to keep and maintain their assurance as they should have been, but upon one account or another have left that blessed assurance that once they had; how may such sad souls be supported and kept from fainting, sinking, and languishing under the loss of assurance?

To this question I shall give these following answers:

First, Souls that have lost that sweet assurance that once they had, may be supported and kept from fainting and sinking, *by considering, that though they have lost their assurance, yet they have not lost their sonship;* for once sons and always sons. You are sons, though dejected sons; you are sons, though comfortless sons; you are sons, though mourning sons, Rom. viii. 15–17. Once children, and always children; once heirs, and always heirs; once beloved, and always beloved; once happy, and always happy:[3] 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, 'Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desires, although he make it not to grow.' Well, says David, though neither myself, nor my house, have been so exact and perfect in our walkings before God as we should, but we have broken our covenants with him, and dealt unworthily by him, and turned our backs upon him, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, he hath engaged himself to an everlasting covenant, that he will be my Father, and that I shall be his son. And this is my salvation and everlasting ground of consolation and supportation to my soul.

The *second* support is this, Consider, *that though your comfort, joy, and peace, doth depend much upon your assurance, yet your eternal*

[1] A man may easier make a seeing eye blind than a blind to see; a man may soon put an instrument out of tune, but not soon put it in again; a man is easily borne down the stream, but cannot swim so easily up the stream, &c.

[2] How can the bird fly without wings, and the wheels go without oil, and the workman work without hands, and the painter paint without eyes? &c.

[3] Ps. lxxxix. 30–32, 34; John xiii. 5; Jer. xxxi. 3.

happiness and blessedness doth not depend upon your assurance. If it did, you might be happy and miserable in a day, ay, in an hour. Your happiness lies in your union with God, in your communion with God, in your interest in God, and not in your seeing and knowing your interest; your joy and comfort lies in your seeing and knowing your interest in God, but your everlasting happiness lies in your being interested in God. The welfare and happiness of the child lies in the interest that he hath in his father, but the joy and comfort of the child lies in his seeing, in his knowing of his interest in his father. It is so between the Lord and believers: Ps. cxliv. 15, 'Happy be the people that be in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.' Among the philosophers there were two hundred and eighty opinions concerning happiness, some affirming happiness to lie in one thing, some in another. Ah! but by the Spirit and word we are taught that happiness lies in our oneness with God, in our nearness and dearness to God, and in our conformity to God, &c.[1] Mark, the Scripture pronounces him happy, whose hope is in God, though he want assurance: Ps. cxlvi. 5, 'Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God.' Again, he is happy that trusteth in the Lord, though for the present he want assurance: Prov. xvi. 20, 'And whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he.' Again, he is happy that feareth the Lord, that hath set up God as the object of his fear, though he want assurance of the love of God: Prov. xxviii. 14, 'Happy is the man that feareth always;' that fears to offend, that fears to disobey, that fears to rebel, &c. Again, he is happy that believes in Christ, that rests and stays upon Christ, as the Scriptures everywhere testify, though he may want assurance.

Happiness lies not in any transient act of the Spirit, as assurance is, but in the more permanent and lasting acts of the Spirit. The philosopher could say, 'That he was never a happy man that might afterwards become miserable.' If a man's eternal happiness did lie in the assurance of his happiness, then might a man be crowned with Xerxes's steersman in the morning, and beheaded with him in the evening of the same day.

But this is the believer's blessedness, that his condition is always good, though he doth not always see it to be good; that his state is always safe, though it be not always comfortable.[2]

The *third* support to keep those precious souls from fainting and sinking that have lost that sweet assurance that once they had, is to consider that *though their loss be the greatest and saddest loss that could befall them, yet it is a recoverable loss, it is a loss that may be recovered, as the scriptures in the margin do clearly evidence.*[3] And

[1] *Nemo aliorum sensu miser est, sed suo*—Salvian, *de Gub. Dei*, lib. i. A godly man's happiness or misery is not to be judged by the world's sense or feeling, but his own.

[2] To make up happiness, these things must concur: *first*, it must be a convenient good, a suitable good to our natures; *secondly*, it must be an excellent good, a good that hath worth and excellency in it; *thirdly*, it must be a sufficient good; a few scrapings of gold will not make a man rich, &c.; *fourthly*, it must be a permanent good. It is permanency that sets the greatest price, and hath the greatest influence, into our happiness and felicity.

[3] Ps. lxxi. 20, 21, and xlii. 5, 7, 8; Isa. liv. 7, 8; Micah vii. 18, 19; Cant. iii. 4; Ps. lxxxiv. 11, &c.

doth not this age, as well as former, furnish us with many instances of this kind?[1] Doubtless many there are among the precious sons and daughters of Zion that have lost this pearl of price, and after waiting, weeping, and wrestling, have found it again; therefore be not discouraged, O sighing, losing souls! In the loss of temporals, it is a great support to men's spirits that their loss may be made up, and why should it not be so in spirituals also?

The *fourth* support to keep their hearts from sinking and breaking that have lost that sweet assurance that once they had, is, seriously to consider *that your loss is no greater, nor no sadder, than what the noblest and the choicest saints have sustained, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together.*[2] Those that were once the worthies of this world, and are now triumphing in that other world among the princes of glory, have lost that sweet assurance and sense of divine love and favour that once they enjoyed; therefore let not your spirits faint and fail. In temporal trials it is a comfort and a support to have companions with us; and why should it not much more be so in spirituals? Acts xvi.

The *fifth* support to bear up their spirits that have lost that sweet assurance that once they had, is for them *to remember, and seriously mind, that though they have lost assurance, yet they have not lost the blessed breathings and sweet influences of the Spirit upon them.* Witness their love to Christ, their longing after Christ, their fear of offending Christ, their care to please Christ, their high esteem of Christ, and their mourning for the dishonours that by themselves or others are done to Christ, &c.[3] A man may enjoy the warmth, heat, and influence of the sun, when he hath lost the sight of the sun. David had lost his assurance, he had lost the sight of the sun; and yet he enjoyed the warmth and influences of it upon his heart, as is evident in Psalm li.

Though thy sun, O Christian, be set in a cloud, yet it will rise again, and in the interim thou hast and dost enjoy the warmth and influences of the sun; therefore sorrow not, mourn not, as one without hope. Those warm influences that the Sun of righteousness hath now upon thy heart, are infallible evidences that he will shine forth and smile upon thee as in the days of old; therefore let thy bow still abide in strength, Ps. xlii. 5, 7, 8, 11.

The *sixth* support to keep their hearts from fainting and sinking that have lost that sweet assurance that once they had, is seriously to consider, *that it will be but as a day, but as a short day, before the loss of thy assurance shall be made up with a more clear, full, perfect, and complete enjoyment of God.* Ere long, O mourning soul, thy sun shall rise and never set, thy joy and comfort shall be always fresh and green; God shall comfort thee on every side, it shall be night with thee no more, thou shalt be always in the bosom of God, Isa. lvii. 18–20. Ps. lxxi. 20, 21, 'Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles shalt

[1] Glover, and many others, yea, a cloud of witnesses, might be found to testify this truth. [Glover: Clarke, as before.—G.]

[2] Ps. xxx. 6, 7, and li. 12; Job xxiii. 8, 9; Isa. viii. 17.

[3] Cant. iii. 5; Micah. vii. 7–9, compared, Isa. viii. 17, l. 10.

quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depth of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.' The day is at hand, O perplexed soul, when thou shalt have smiles without frowns, light without darkness, day without night, wine without water, sweet without bitter, and joy without sorrow.

The year of jubilee is at hand. Thou now sowest in tears, thou shalt shortly reap in joy; yea, 'everlasting joy shall be upon thy head,' and 'sorrow and sighing shall flee away,' therefore faint not.[1]

The third question is this, viz., What means must souls use to recover assurance when it is lost?

I shall give a few short answers to this question, and so draw to a close.

First, If thou wouldst recover assurance, then thou must *labour diligently to find out that sin, that Achan, that hath robbed thee of thy wedge of gold, of thy assurance.*[2] Surely it is not for infirmities, but enormities, that God hath put out thy candle, and caused thy sun to set at noon. Surely thou hast been feeding, I say not tasting, of forbidden fruit, that God hath stripped thee of thy robes, and taken the crown from off thy head, and turned thee out of paradise. But this is not all.

Therefore, in the *second* place, *weep much, mourn much, over the Achan, over those wickednesses that have turned thy day into night, thy rejoicing into sighing,* &c. David doth thus in Psalm li., and God takes him up from his knees, and restores to him 'the joy of his salvation.' Though God be displeased with your sins, yet he is well-pleased with your tears.[3] The promise is, that he will 'revive the spirit of the contrite,' Isa. lvii. 15. It is said of Adam that he turned his face towards the garden of Eden, and from his heart lamented his fall. Ah! losing souls, turn your face towards heaven, and from your hearts lament your fall, lament your loss. Nothing puts God to it like penitent tears. No sooner doth Ephraim weep over his sins, but the bowels of God are stirring towards him, and God cannot hold but he must proclaim to the world that mourning Ephraim, bemoaning Ephraim, is his dear son, his pleasant child, and that he will 'surely have mercy on him; or, as the Hebrew hath it, *Rahhem arahhamenu,* 'I will have mercy, have mercy on him,' or, 'I will abundantly have mercy on him,'[4] Jer. xxxi. 18–20. When our hearts are set to weep over our sins, God will so act in ways of love towards us, that it shall not be long night with our souls. God will never suffer them to be drowned in sorrow that are set upon drowning their sins in penitential tears. The Jews

[1] Lev. xxv.; Ps. cxxix. 5; Isa. xxxv. 2.

[2] Austin saith, *Humanum est peccare, diabolicum perseverare, et angelicum resurgere,* it is a human thing to fall into sin, a devilish to persevere therein, and an angelical or supernatural to rise from it.

[3] Rev. ii. 4, 5. When ancient Rome was heathenish, if the malefactor brought to be whipped fell upon his knees at his feet whom he had offended, it was held a sin if he suffered him to be whipped.

[4] It is an excellent expression of Basil, It grieves, it irks, it is tedious to our most munificent, great, glorious King. If we ask anything little of him, he would have us ask great things of him.

have a saying, that since the destruction of Jerusalem, the door of prayers hath been shut; but the door of tears was never shut, saith one. God hath by promise engaged himself that those that 'sow in tears shall reap in joy,' Ps. cxxvi. 5. The tears of the saints have such a kind of omnipotency in them, that God himself cannot withstand them: 2 Kings xx. 5, 'I have seen thy tears, behold, I will heal thee; on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord.'[1]

Thirdly, If you would recover assurance, then *sit not down discouraged, but be up and doing.* Remember what a pearl of price thou hast lost, and 'repent and do thy first works,' Rev. ii. 4, 5. Fall close to the good old work of believing, meditating, examining, praying, hearing, mourning, &c.[2] Begin the world again, and set afresh upon those very ways by which at first thou didst get assurance; fall upon family duties, apply thyself to public ordinances, be much in closet services; stir up every gift that is in thee, stir up every grace that is in thee, stir up all the life that is in thee, and never leave blowing till thou hast blowed thy little spark into a flame; never leave turning thy penny, till thou hast turned thy penny into a pound; never leave improving thy mite, till thy mite be turned into a million. God will be found in the use of means, and he will restore our lost mercies in the use of means, Ps. xxii. 26. But this is not all.

Therefore, in the *fourth* place, *wait patiently upon the Lord.* David did so, and at length the Lord brought him out of a horrible pit, or out of a pit of noise and confusion, and set his feet upon a rock, and established his goings, and put a new song of praise into his mouth, Ps. xl. 1–3. God never hath, nor never will fail the waiting soul. Though God loves to try the patience of his children, yet he doth not love to tire out the patience of his children; therefore he will not contend for ever, neither will he be always wroth, lest the spirits of his people should fail, Isa. lvii. 16–19. Assurance is a jewel worth waiting for. It is a pearl that God gives to none but such as have waited long at mercy's door. It is a crown that every one must win by patient waiting before he can wear. God doth not think the greatest mercies too good for waiting souls, though he knows the least mercy is too good for impatient souls. The breasts of the promises lie fair and open to waiting souls, Isa. xxx. 18, and lxiv. 4, and xlix. 23. The waiting soul shall have anything of God, but the froward and impatient soul gets nothing of God but frowns, and blows, and wounds, and broken bones. Sad souls should do well to make that text their bosom companion, John xiv. 18, 'I will not leave you comfortless,' or orphans, ὀρφανούς, 'I will come to you.' And that Heb. x. 36, 37, 'For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while' (as it is in the Greek), 'and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.'

Fifthly and lastly, If you would recover assurance, then *take heed of refusing comforts when God brings them to your door; take heed of*

[1] Ps. xxxix. 12; Job xvi. 20; Mark ix. 24, 25, &c.

[2] A man that hath been recovered formerly out of such or such a disease, if he be relapsed, he will to the same means again, he will apply the same remedies again; this did once do me good, I will try it again.

throwing gospel cordials against the wall. This was Asaph's sin: 'My soul refused to be comforted.'[1] God comes and offers love to the soul, and the soul refuses it; God comes and spreads the promises of consolation before the soul, and the soul refuses to look upon them; God comes and makes tenders of the riches of grace, and the soul refuses to accept of them. Sometimes the hand, the man that brings the cordial, is not liked, and therefore men refuse it. Well! remember this: when gold is offered, men care not how great or how base he is that offers it. Neither should we care by whom the cordials and consolations of the gospel are offered to us, whether they are offered by the hand of Isaiah, a prophet of the blood-royal, as some think, or by Amos, from amongst the herdsmen of Tekoa. If the sweetmeats of heaven are set before thee, it is thy wisdom and thy duty to taste of them, and to feed upon them, without stumbling at the hand that presents them.

Now for a close I shall make a few short uses of what hath been said, and so conclude.

[1.] *The first use.* You that have assurance, *be thankful for it.* It is a jewel more worth than heaven and earth; therefore be thankful. Assurance is a mercy nobly-descended; it is from above. Man is not born with it in his heart, as he is with a tongue in his mouth, James i. 17. Assurance is a peculiar mercy; it is a flower of paradise that God sticks only in his children's bosoms. Assurance is a mercy-sweetening mercy; it is a mercy that puts the garland upon all our mercies. Assurance makes every bitter sweet, and every sweet more sweet. He enjoys little that wants it, he wants nothing that enjoys it; therefore be you thankful that have and do find the sweetness of it.

If Philip rejoiced that Alexander was born in the days of Aristotle, how much more cause have you to rejoice, upon whose heads the Lord hath put the crown of assurance, a crown of more worth and weight than all princes' crowns in the world.[2]

[2.] *The second use.* If God hath given you assurance, then *do not envy the outward felicity and happiness of the men of the world,* Ps. xxxvii. 17, 18; Prov. xxiii. 17. Alas![3] what are mountains of dust to mountains of gold? what are the stones of the street to rocks of pearl? what are crowns of thorns to crowns of gold, &c.? No more are all the treasures, honours, pleasures, and favours of this world to assurance. The envious man hath so many tortures as the envied hath praisers.[4] It is the justice of envy to kill and torment the envious. The men of the world are real objects of pity, but not of envy. Who envies the prisoner at the bar? Who envies the malefactor that is going to execution? Who envies the dead man that is going to his grave? God hath

[1] Ambrose saith, If I would offer thee gold to-day, thou wouldst not say, I will come to-morrow. And wilt thou lightly and slightly put God off when he offers peace and comfort to thy soul?

[2] Plato was very thankful that God made him a man, and not a woman; a Grecian and not a barbarian; a scholar to Socrates, and not to any other philosopher. Oh what cause then have you to be thankful for assurance?

[3] See Glossary under 'Alas.'—G.

[4] Socrates wished that envious men had more eyes and more ears than others, that they might be more tormented than others, by beholding others' happiness.

done more for thee by giving thee assurance than if he had given thee all the world, yea, ten thousand worlds.

When the Spanish ambassador boasted that his master was king of such a place, and of such a place, and of such a place, &c., the French ambassador answered, My master is king of France, king of France, king of France; signifying thereby that France was of as much worth or more worth, than all the kingdoms under the power of the king of Spain. Ah, Christians! when the men of the world shall cry out, Oh, their riches! oh, their honours! oh, their preferments! &c., you may well cry out, Oh, assurance, assurance, assurance! &c.; there being more real worth and glory in that than is to be found in all the wealth and glory of the world; therefore do not envy the outward prosperity and felicity of worldly men, &c.

[3.] *The third use.* If God hath given you assurance, then *give no way to slavish fears.* Fear not the scorn and reproaches of men, fear not wants. God will not deny him a crust to whom he hath given a Christ; he will not deny him a crumb upon whom he hath bestowed a crown; he will not deny him a less mercy upon whom he hath bestowed assurance, which is the prince of mercies. Fear not death, for why shouldst thou fear death, that hast assurance of a better life?[1]

[4.] *The fourth use.* If God hath given you a well-grounded assurance of your everlasting happiness and blessedness, then question *his love no more.* God doth not love to have his love at every turn called in question by those that he hath once assured of his love; he doth expect, that as no sin of ours doth make any substantial alteration in his affections to us, so none, no, not his sharpest dispensations, should make any alteration in our thoughts and affections towards him, Ps. lxxxix. 30–35; Jer. xxxi. 3; Eccles. ix. 8.

[5.] *The fifth use.* If God hath given you assurance, then *live holily, live angelically, keep your garments pure and white, walk with an even foot, be shining lights,* Rev. iii. 4; Mat. v. 16. Your happiness here is your holiness, and in heaven your highest happiness will be your perfect holiness. Holiness differs nothing from happiness, but in name. Holiness is happiness in the bud, and happiness is holiness at the full. Happiness is nothing but the quintessence of holiness. The more holy any man is, the more the Lord loves him, John xiv. 21–23.[2]

Augustine doth excellently observe, in his tract on John i. 14, 'that God loved the humanity of Christ more than any man, because he was fuller of grace and truth than any man.' The philosopher could say, 'that God was but an empty name without virtue.' So are all our professions without holiness.[3] Holiness is the very marrow and quintessence of all religion. Holiness is God stamped and printed upon the

[1] Saul had but fivepence to give the seer; the seer after much good cheer gives him freely the kingdom, 1 Sam. ix. 8, and x. 1. So God deals with his.

[2] *Vive ut vivas,* live, that thou mayest live. Live in such sort, saith Periander, king of Corinth, that thou mayest have honour by thy life, and that after thy death men may account thee happy. [Diog. Laert., *sub nomine.*—G.]

[3] *Ille non est bonus qui non vult esse melior.* The loose walking of many Christians was, as Salvian complains, made by the pagans the reproach of Christ himself, saying, If Christ had taught holy doctrine, surely his followers had led better lives. [Salvian, D. G., lib. iv.—G.]

soul; it is Christ formed in the heart; it is our light, our life, our beauty, our glory, our joy, our crown, our heaven, our all. The holy soul is happy in life, and blessed in death, and shall be transcendently glorious in the morning of the resurrection, when Christ shall say, Lo, here am I, and my holy ones, who are my joy; Lo, here am I, and my holy ones, who are my crown; and therefore, upon the heads of these holy ones will I set an immortal crown. Even so, Amen! Lord Jesus.

END OF VOL. II.

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